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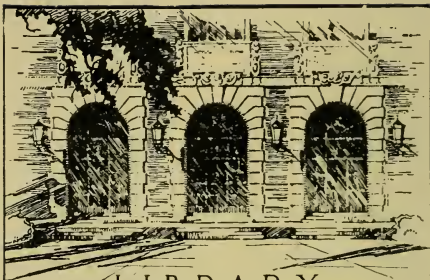
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THE DISCLOSURE



# THE DISCARDED SON.



A TALE.



Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



THE  
DISCARDED SON;

OR,  
*HAUNT OF THE BANDITTI.*

A Tale.

---

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

---

BY  
REGINA MARIA ROCHE,  
*AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, &c.*

---

Thou hast been  
As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
A man who Fortune's buffets and rewards  
Has ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are they  
Whose blood and judgment mingled are so well,  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger,  
To sound what stop she please.

SHAKESPEARE.

  
VOL.

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# THE DISCARDED SON.

## CHAP. I.

“ In struggling with misfortunes  
Lies the proof of virtue : on smooth seas  
How many bawble boats dare set their sails,  
And make an equal way with firmer vessels !  
But let the tempest once enrage the sea,  
And then behold the strong-ribb'd *Argosie*  
Bounding between the ocean and the air,  
Like *Perseus* mounted on his *Pegasus* :  
Then where are those weak rivals of the main !  
Or to avoid the tempest fled to port,  
Or made a prey to *Neptune*. Even thus  
Do empty show and true priz'd worth divide  
In storms of fortune.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THAT the race is not always to the swift,  
nor the battle to the strong ; neither bread  
to the wise, nor yet riches to the men of  
understanding, nor favour to men of  
VOL. I. B skill—

skill—all ages, all countries have furnished us with instances. Of these, Captain Munro perhaps was not the least striking ; gifted by nature with all that was requisite to render him amiable—possessed of every advantage that education and fortune could bestow—born under the happiest auspices, and surrounded, on his outset in life, by friends affectionate and anxious in the extreme for his advancement in it, he had not advanced far in his career ere he found himself rapidly descending into the vale of adversity, and others as rapidly ascending to the summit of prosperity, who, from the early disadvantages under which they had laboured, he could not have supposed would have been able to have made a successful effort to approach it.

Of these, the chances and changes of this mortal state, the little fortitude man would have to support himself beneath them, but for the strength and consolation derived from religion, Captain Munro deeply pondered, as he journeyed from  
Glengary

Glengary Castle, the residence of his father, towards his own.

The day was far advanced when he remounted his horse at the ancient gateway of the castle, for the last time, he was inclined to believe, as no consideration whatever should induce him again, he determined, to seek a reconciliation with his father, so cruelly, so insultingly had his overtures for one been now rejected.

Rain also fell in torrents, and the wind swept in hollow gusts over the heath, driving before it the withered burrs, and making the old trees, that scantily dotted the soil, groan beneath its fury.

But notwithstanding the resentment which glowed in his breast—notwithstanding the violence of the tempest to which he was exposed, Captain Munro, on reaching the top of a hill that afforded a view of his native home, could not prevent himself from checking his horse, in order to indulge himself with another view of it—yes, indulge ; for though it no longer

afforded him a shelter, he could not forget the happy days in which it had done so; and the remembrance of these made him feel something of that kind of pleasure in gazing on it, he would have done in contemplating the features of an old friend. The idea of his departed mother, the tenderest of parents, the most amiable of women, was associated with every view, with every recollection of it. He sighed as her memory now revived in his mind, and involuntarily thought what she must suffer, if departed spirits were allowed to review the transactions of this world, at the shameless scenes now passing in the mansion to which she had given consequence and estimation.

“ But heaven,” exclaimed he, suddenly and aloud, with an outstretched arm and uplifted eyes, “ heaven would not be heaven, were the cares, the inquietudes of this life to gain admission to it. No—all there is peace and joy; no tear is in the eye, no sorrow in the heart, to engender  
one.

one. Happy state of rest ; happy he, be his troubles what they may, whose conscience insures him such.—Oh God !” he continued, with increasing fervour, “ let me never be deprived of this last consolation ; though happiness may be denied me here, let me never despair of it hereafter.—Nor will I despair of it here,” he added, after a pause ; “ for to despair, is to doubt the goodness of that Being who has promised to befriend those that put their trust in him. As the sun will again look forth, in all his beauty, upon these now streaming fields ; as the clouds which veil the heavens will be dispersed, so will I hope for the restoration of prosperity, and the dispersion of the clouds that now obscure my horizon.”

He cast another lingering look at old Glengary (as he styled the castle), and rode on. While he pursues his journey, we shall take a retrospective view of his life.

Captain Robert Munro was the only  
B 3 child

child of a Scotch gentleman of considerable property, and who bestowed on him an education suitable to his prospects. Disliking a life of idleness for him, in consequence of the dissipation he had known such to occasion, he intended him for one of the learned professions: this intention proved by no means agreeable to the young gentleman; he possessed an ardent temper, an enthusiastic imagination, had heard, like Douglas, of battles, and longed to follow to the field some warlike lord—in short, he was too much fired, by what he had heard of the deeds of heroes, not to resolve on seeking, like them, to immortalize himself in the fields of the valiant. His father warmly opposed this resolution; but, although his mother dreaded the dangers attached to a military life, the constant and animated pleadings of this her adored son, by degrees obtained her acquiescence to his wishes; she became his advocate, and soon prevailed on his father to purchase a commission for him in a marching regiment,

ment, which, shortly after he had entered, was ordered on foreign service. During the period of his continuance abroad, young Munro visited various climates, and had ample experience of the dangers and hardships incidental to his profession, but which neither damped his spirit, nor for an instant caused him to regret the one he had chosen. This, however, was by no means the case with his parents; they never ceased lamenting it, more especially when intelligence reached them of his having been dreadfully wounded in an engagement in one of the West India islands; intelligence which was speedily followed by his return to his native kingdom, owing to the advice of his physicians, who, without such a measure, protested his recovery was every thing but impossible.

His mother made use of the opportunity his return afforded, to endeavour to prevail on him to quit the army, but, though naturally of a yielding disposition, without avail, since he was now not only

more attached than ever to his profession, but conceived his leaving it at this crisis would be to compromise his honour, as he doubted not his doing so would be imputed to the danger he had been in. Finding him inexorable, she prevailed on his father to purchase him a troop in a regiment of dragoons, in consequence of being informed, by some military friends, the cavalry was not so liable to be ordered abroad as the infantry. Of what she had done he received no intimation, until his promotion appeared in the gazette. The young captain would infinitely have preferred continuing in his old regiment, as in it he fancied he should have had a quicker opportunity of reaping the laurels he was so ambitious of obtaining—that he would have done so, however, neither his filial duty or grateful nature, would permit his acknowledging to his idolizing mother.

The monotonous life to which he found himself doomed on joining his new regiment,  
quartered

quartered in a country town in England, by no means accorded with his active spirit. He derived, however, one advantage from it—that of being able to renew the studies which the pressure of his professional duties, while abroad, had obliged him to suspend; but he was not allowed to pursue them without interruption—there were in this corps, as there are in many others, several idle dissipated characters, disinclined to do good themselves, and equally so to let others. These beset Munro, and, by degrees, drew him into the pernicious practice of gaming, in which he was too great a novice not to let them reap all the advantages they wished for. In consequence his drafts upon his father became so frequent, and so considerable, that a serious investigation into the cause of them at length took place.

Munro shrunk not from it; he candidly answered the enquiries addressed to him, was admonished by his mother of the enormity of the vice he had been led into,

solemnly abjured it, and was forgiven, at least by her. The mind, however, which has been for any period dissipated, cannot immediately revert to rational pursuits—like the sea after a storm, it requires some time to subside into calmness: Munro more eagerly, therefore, than ever, though always from a lively and social temper so inclined, entered into company. Amongst the families in the neighbourhood in which he was quartered, who paid particular attention to him and his brother officers, was that of a respectable merchant, who, after making a handsome fortune in Cadiz, had returned to spend the fruits of his industry in his native country. As he was quitting Spain there was committed to his care a young Spanish lady, for the purpose of having her educated in England. Her education was completed just as Munro became acquainted with her, and she only delayed returning to her native country till she had acquired that perfect knowledge of the manners and customs of the people she

had

had been brought up amongst, which, while at school, it was impossible for her to do. Nothing could be more attractive, more engaging than she was; but in place of giving a description of her, we will give the animated one the Chevalier de Bourgoanne has given of her country-women in general, as one she perfectly accorded with.

“Nothing,” says he, “is more engaging than a young female Spaniard at fifteen years of age—a face perfectly oval; hair of a fine clear auburn, equally divided on the forehead, and only bound by a silk net; large black eyes; a mouth full of graces; an attitude always modest; a simple habit of neat black serge, exactly fitting the body, and gently pressing the wrist; a little hand, perfectly proportioned; in fine, every thing charms in these youthful virgins: they recal to our recollection the softness, beauty, dress, and simplicity of the young Grecian females, of whom antiquity has left such elegant models—the

angels in Spanish comedy are always represented by young girls."

The heart of our young soldier was susceptible, in the extreme, of the power of beauty, particularly when combined, as was the case in the present instance, with elegance, modesty, and intelligence; in short, he soon became the captive of the fair foreigner, nor did she seem insensible to his merits; but, enamoured as he was, he did not seek to inspire her with a reciprocal passion. There were obstacles, he feared, in the way of their union, which would prove insurmountable; honour, therefore, forbade his endeavouring to create too lively an interest for himself in her heart—these obstacles were the nationality and bigotry of his father: he determined, however, not to despair altogether of overcoming them, till he had applied to his mother on the subject. Just as he had made up his mind to do this, an express arrived to inform him she was given over: he instantly set off for Scotland, but, notwithstanding

withstanding his travelling without intermission, he only reached home time enough to assist in paying the last sad duties to her remains. Her death overwhelmed him with the most poignant grief; in losing her he lost not only the tenderest of parents, but the most faithful of friends, one to whom upon all occasions he could safely open his heart, with confidence of receiving both advice and consolation, did he stand in need of either. But it was not simply grief it excited, it also occasioned repentance, for he now began to think, that the anxiety she suffered, in consequence of his remaining in the army, had shortened her days; and, from the horror he felt at the idea, he would have given worlds, had they been in his power, to have recalled the period in which he had the power of ceding his wishes to her's. But, alas! time will not return, neither will the grave give up its dead; how scrupulous, therefore, should we be in our conduct to our relatives and friends, since,

terrible

terrible to the heart of feeling is the remorse it experiences for errors not to be repaired.

“ The woods, the wilds, the melancholy glooms” by which his paternal home was surrounded, too well suited his feelings at this juncture, not to make him wish to continue there some time; but, even if this had not been the case, he would still have felt this wish on account of his father, to whom, at this period, he conceived his society absolutely indispensable; he soon, however, found that he was mistaken in thinking so—that his father had felt but a transient regret, if any, for his mother’s loss, and that, for the estimation in which he had been so long held in the neighbourhood, he was solely indebted to her. Mr. Munro was indeed the very reverse of what his amiable lady had made him appear. The defects in his disposition were not known to her till they were married; but though her uniting her fate with his was in obedience to the wishes of her father,

ther,

ther, not her own, she as scrupulously concealed them as if he had been her own immediate choice, and she had consequently dreaded their discovery occasioning her judgment to be called in question. She did more than conceal, she tried to remove them, but to no purpose—as he clearly demonstrated, by marrying, a very few weeks after her death, a woman formerly in her service, but whom he had seduced from it, and from that period till the one he made her his wife, kept in an obscure house in the vicinity of the castle.

This event, of which he had neither warning nor suspicion, till it took place, excited feelings in the pure and noble mind of Munro, easier to be conceived than described. It was not, however, so much on account of the ruin in which it threatened to involve his prospects (for he was entirely dependant on his father), and that he could easily be warped from paying attention to the claims of nature, he had given too striking a proof to permit a

doubt to be entertained on the subject, as on account of the disrespect it evinced to the memory of his mother, that he mourned and resented it. That, ere the tomb was well closed upon her, her place should be filled up, by such a woman too—so vile! so abject! so despicable! so every way unworthy of being her successor, filled him with indignation too great for suppression; in the first paroxysm of which, though his leave of absence was not expired, he fled precipitately from the house, with almost a determination never to enter it again.

Dejected and unhappy, he rejoined his regiment; but in place of seeking, as he had heretofore done, he now sedulously shunned society, particularly that of the family in which the lovely Spaniard resided; for since all hope of being united to her was at an end, now that he had lost the friend, through whose interference alone he had ever believed it possible his father's consent to their being so could be obtained, he thought the sooner they ceased  
to

to have any communication with one another the better.

In his resolution of avoiding her he persevered for some time, when one afternoon, as he was returning, heated, fatigued, and covered with dust, from a solitary excursion he had taken to some mountains in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of amusing himself with his gun, he came suddenly upon a large party of ladies and gentlemen on horseback, amongst whom he soon discovered his fair Spaniard and the friends she resided with. The delight which these latter testified at seeing him, the kind reproaches they made him for so long absenting himself from their society, and the earnest manner in which they pressed him to come again amongst them, overcame his honourable, his prudential resolutions. The consequence of his again becoming a visitor at their cheerful, hospitable mansion was, the renewal of his love for the beautiful Spaniard, which absence from her had begun a little to weaken.

How

How he told his soft tale, or she replied to it, is not necessary to mention; suffice, one fine moonlight night, but whether tempted by Cinthia, by Cupid, or by both together, cannot, here at least, be determined, she suffered him to hand her into a chaise-and-four, which stood most conveniently, at the moment, near the garden of her guardian, step in himself after her, and bid the postillions face to the North. Ere their matrimonial fetters were well rivetted, intelligence of this step was received by Mr. Munro, owing to the vigilant eye which his new helpmate kept upon his son, under the hope of being able to detect him in some act, which should give her an opportunity of completely ruining him with his father, and thus of gratifying the malice his refusing to notice her had engendered in her heart against him; as also of quieting her fears of his yet regaining his wonted ascendancy at home, than which nothing she knew could be more inimical to the designs she entertained upon the fortune  
he

he had so long been considered undoubted heir to. Had she been as well acquainted with the disposition of her husband as her predecessor was, she would have spared herself half the pains she took to aggravate his resentment against his son, as she would then have known he wanted no stimulus to render him cruel and severe to those who in the least offended him. But though this imprudent marriage of his son's galled him, by disappointing the ambitious projects he had formed for him, he still could scarcely regret it, since it furnished him with a plausible pretext for exiling him from his society, and thus freeing himself from a person whose presence, from being a reproach, was hateful to him.

The young Captain, accordingly, in reply to the letter he wrote to acquaint him with his marriage, and deprecate the resentment he knew it calculated to excite, received one couched in the most violent and virulent terms, informing him his notification

fication on the subject was totally unnecessary, that no entreaty, no supplication should ever obtain from him the forgiveness he required, nor any share again of his favour or fortune. Munro expected him to be violent in the first instance, and was not, therefore, much disappointed by this letter; notwithstanding it and his preceding conduct, however, he could not, when he took a retrospective view of things, divest himself of a hope that time might yet bring about a reconciliation between them. In the mean while, his wife made a similar application to her father, but to as little purpose—he was not only as national and bigotted as old Munro, but ten times more proud and ambitious, looking forward to nothing less than matching his daughter with some great hidalgo. If therefore the Squire was irritated here, the Don was irritated there, and, in terms scarcely more civil than Munro had expressed himself in to his son, declared his total and solemn renunciation of her. She endeavoured to  
obtain.

obtain the merchant's interference with him, but he was so exasperated at what he styled the slippery trick she had played him, the bad example he conceived she had set his daughters, and the suspicious light in which she had made his character appear to her father, whom he had many reasons for wishing to stand well with, that he positively refused either to aid her in this instance, or to have any further communication with her.

Time, at length, that great dispeller of illusions, began to convince Captain Munro, that the hopes with which he had hitherto buoyed himself up, of yet obtaining his father's forgiveness, were completely fallacious. He was no sooner convinced of this, than he made up his mind to leave the army, for some situation that might give him a chance of being able to provide for the family there was a probability of his having. After some little consultation with himself and his fair partner, a country life was decided on, as both  
were

were partial to Nature in her rural walks, and he besides had, he conceived, a sufficient knowledge of agriculture to undertake the management of a farm.

These plans for the future, once formed, no time was lost in carrying them into effect. Munro retired from the service on half-pay, taking a difference, with which, and his bond for three hundred pounds, payable in the course of some years, he purchased a small farm, about twenty miles from the place of his nativity, for which he had still something of that kind of attachment some believe the disembodied spirit to have for its deserted mansion of clay.

For some years, during which he became the father of two fine children, a boy and a girl, he went on, perfectly satisfied at having, like Cincinnatus, turned his sword into a ploughshare, when a bad harvest, and the failure of some expensive speculative experiments in agriculture, which he had been induced to make by the example of others

others in the neighbourhood, so embarrassed him, as to make him resolve on another effort for a reconciliation with his father. To resolve and to execute were almost the same thing with him; he accordingly, after very little deliberation on the subject, set off early one morning for the ancient mansion of his forefathers.

Various and affecting were the feelings and reflections which arose in his mind, as he drew near it. He could not, without the liveliest emotion, review the haunts of his youth, or think of those halcyon days, in which no cloud rested on his prospects, no care dwelt on his heart, that they brought to his remembrance; nevertheless, he alighted at the castle with tolerable composure, but which the sight, or rather the emotion they evinced at seeing him, of some of the old domestics who had lived there during the lifetime of his mother, and whom her successor, partly for the sake of appearances, partly for the sake of gratifying her pride, by being served by those  
with

with whom she had served, had been induced to retain, nearly overcame him.

He imagined he should have found it a difficult matter to gain access to his father, but in this he was mistaken; since he had found the way to the castle again, the old gentleman doubted not his persisting in visiting it until he had seen him; he, therefore, conceived it better at once to give him an interview, in which opinion his lady and oracle, as with reason she might be styled, since he appealed to her judgment in every instance, perfectly coincided, a coincidence for which he was indebted to her having no longer any apprehension of his son's regaining any influence over him, as also to a wish of beholding him (the younger Munro) mortified and disappointed—he was accordingly admitted. To detail the particulars of the interview were superfluous; suffice, after much argument on one side, much altercation and invective on the other, -Mr. Munro agreed to take his son again into favour, provided he endeavoured

deavoured to repudiate his wife, or, at all events, consented to send her and her children to Spain. This inhuman, as well as infamous proposal, was received with the indignation it merited by the person to whom it was addressed—an indignation which nothing but its having come from the lips of a parent could possibly have restrained.

“I am answered, Sir,” said he, with forced calmness, but an ashy and quivering lip; “and that I may not forget what, from the connexion which subsists between us, I still wish to feel for you, I will endeavour to forget what you have said.”

He hurried to the hall—the old servants still lingered there, conjecturing and conversing—the pleasing expectations in which they had been rather indulging, from judging a little of the heart of his father by their own, vanished the moment he appeared, as his countenance was a faithful index to <sup>his</sup> volume within. He pressed <sup>for some brief time</sup> ~~for a~~ time—the door, but there was <sup>no</sup> I dare

and a mist in his eyes, at the moment, which prevented his immediately seeing his horse was not there. The poor animal, indeed, had met with a much better reception than he had, having been taken into the stable and well fed. Munro, the instant he missed him, requested he might be brought to him. He was obeyed; but as the old groom (Munro's first instructor in the exercise of riding) held the stirrup for him to mount, he could not forbear saying, he was sure there was a more perilous storm coming on than just then prevailed.

“Aye, and so am I too, Andrew,” cried the housekeeper, eagerly coming forward, though at the risk of having the fine crimson-coloured ribbon with which her cap was bedecked, and on which she set no small store, in consequence of thinking it vastly becoming, completely spoiled by the rain—“so am I too; it would be mad—on the otherfore, for any one who could get his son again into n.”

Munro,

Munro, as he settled himself in his saddle, looked earnestly in her face, and "but, my friend, I can get no shelter here," nearly escaped him; but though he could prevent his tongue from speaking, he could not his looks.

"I have got a snug fire in my room," resumed the housekeeper, who read his countenance quite as well as Lavater himself could have done, "and—and——"

"God bless you all, my good friends!" cried Munro, in a broken and not very articulate voice, his swimming eyes glancing hastily round; "God bless you all!" he repeated more collectedly, and more emphatically, as, kissing and waving his hand, he rode off, leaving them, in defiance of the rain that fell, the wind that howled, rivetted to the spot on which he had parted from them, till he was out of sight.

"Ah, weel, weel!" cried old Andrew, shaking his grey locks, when he could no longer see him, "all in God's own good time——"

I dare to say you'll be comforted for all this."

"Oh, the savage! the barbarian!" exclaimed the housekeeper, with a kind of wild stare, as if just awaking from a trance, "to send his own flesh and blood from the door in such an hour. Andrew," lowering her voice a little, "what do you think such a body may expect in the next world?"

Andrew, from perhaps thinking this rather too delicate a subject to enter upon, declined answering the question; but days, weeks, months, nay years elapsed, ere this the last visit of their young master, as they all persisted in calling him, to his native home, and the cruel treatment he had experienced at it, ceased to be talked of by them.

It was late when Munro reached Heathwood Farm, the name of his little purchase; so late, that he found all his family, but his wife, in bed. She had determined on  
not

not retiring to repose till all hope of his returning that night should be at an end. His doing so destroyed the hopes she was beginning to indulge, as he had said, if the issue of his journey was prosperous, he possibly, nay was almost positive he should remain for the night at Glengary. She endeavoured, however, to conceal the pangs which disappointment gave her, in order to prevent her husband from being more distressed than, with pain, with heart-felt grief, she already saw he was. In place of questioning him directly as to what had passed, as perhaps some of the fair daughters of Eve might have done, she hastened to assist him in changing his thoroughly soaked garments for dry ones, threw fresh wood upon the almost expiring fire, which soon began to sparkle, and send forth an animating blaze, and spread the remains of her frugal dinner upon the board. Munro was affected, even to tears, by her tender attentions—for, as the glorious orb of day never appears so bright,

so cheering, as immediately after a storm, so kindness never makes such an impression upon the heart, as in the moment that it is smarting beneath a sense of the reverse.

He clasped her to his bosom, he thanked her for the comfort which, by her tenderness, she administered to his afflictions.

“Should I not be very cruel, very unkind, not to comfort you for what I have brought upon you?” she fondly asked him, as, sitting on his knee, her arm rested on his shoulder.

“You! you!” cried Munro, with a degree of wildness, “you bring afflictions on me!—No, no,” he passionately exclaimed, “it is my own imprudence, my own folly.”

“I shall be angry, very angry indeed,” cried Mrs. Munro, feigning a gaiety foreign to her heart at the moment, and laying her beautiful little hand upon his mouth, “if you say that again—what, accuse yourself of folly for marrying me!”

“Of something worse,” said he, with a kind

kind of reproachful bitterness against himself; "for have I not marred all thy flattering prospects by doing so?"

"And have you not equally injured your own?"

"Well, if you do not reproach me," resumed Munro, after a few minutes of thoughtfulness—"if you do not repent our union——"

"I!—Oh, if I never have cause to repent any thing more, I shall consider myself a most fortunate woman."

"Then we may yet be happy, spite of fortune," cried her husband, straining her to his heart.

"Nay, can we truly say we are now altogether the reverse, possessed, as we are, of health, innocence, and liberty?"

"True, true, these are blessings, indeed, too great to permit those who possess them to reckon themselves wretched; inestimable blessings, which, with gratitude, I acknowledge ours; and which, with the assistance of Heaven, and by the exertions

of industry, I trust—nay, more, I doubt not we shall be able to retain.”

“ And if we should,” eagerly cried his wife, clasping his hands in her’s, and looking full in his face, “ oh ! my dear friend, though the roof which sheltered our heads was ten times more humble than it is, should we not be content ? ”

Munro bowed his head assentingly—to speak at the moment was impossible.

Munro arose, the morning after his unsuccessful journey to Glengary, with a heavy heart—and, like Shakespeare’s splenetic Jacques, well disposed to rail at the world. But as he knew melancholy and misanthropy would only render bad worse, he checked his present inclination to each, and resolved on losing no time in applying his shoulder to the wheel—that by endeavouring to aid himself by virtuous exertion, he might render himself deserving of that of heaven.—The bond for three hundred pounds was about this crisis nearly due ; on applying to know whether a renewal

newal of it would be accepted instead of payment, he learned that it had been passed into the hands of a person who either had, or pretended to have, immediate occasion for the money. To prevent unpleasant consequences, therefore, it was requisite it should immediately be discharged; he therefore took the necessary steps for that purpose; and with the sum he with difficulty obtained, discharged his obligation, and freed himself also from some smaller debts, which he had unavoidably contracted; in consequence of the expence and disappointment that had attended his experiments in agriculture.

For some time after this, things went on pretty well at Heathwood; the children thrived apace, and were at once the pride and principal pleasure of their parents, who mutually assisted in the task of instructing them. A thousand times, as the fond father gazed upon them, he wondered how his own could have proved so obdurate to him.--“What, what,” he has often exclaimed to himself, as his eyes  
c 5                      wandered

wandered alternately from one to the other, “ could induce me to abandon these creatures? though stained with ten thousand crimes—though loaded with obloquy—though loathed and shunned by all the rest of their species, yet, if sorrowful and contrite they approached my door, could I keep it closed against them?—oh, no!—oh, no!—worlds upon worlds could not tempt, could not prevail on me to do so; their griefs, their shame should be sheltered where their innocence once was, and with their prayers mine should mingle, and be offered up to Heaven for forgiveness for them—that Heaven which disdains not, as its creature man but too frequently does, to accept repentance as an atonement for error.”

But the pleasure which the idolizing parents took in their children was often damped and interrupted by anxiety for their future welfare; unable to make any certain provision for them, and aware of the precariousness of life, they frequently trembled

trembled to think what their destiny might be.

These fears, however, were never encouraged, and often lost, for a considerable period, in their confidence in heaven.—As the mind of Osmond (the name of their son) began to expand, Munro felt persuaded, from the genius and understanding he evinced, that if both were properly cultivated, he would in all probability make a distinguished figure in life, and obtain the means, if not of greatly advancing, at least of rendering his family comfortable. This idea no sooner took possession of his mind, than he determined on straining every point to give him a liberal education ; accordingly, as soon as he was qualified to be sent thither, he accepted the sacrifice of some rich trinkets of his wife's, memorials of happier and more prosperous days, for the purpose of raising a sufficient sum to place and keep him at an English university, which he preferred, on account of the obstacles he doubted not would be

thrown in the way of his advancement, by the malice of his grandfather's new connexions, if he attempted to settle in any of the learned professions in Scotland.

For some time after this favourite plan had been carried into execution, Munro felt happier than he had been for a long time before ; but ere the period allotted for the academic pursuits of Osmond was well more than half expired, the expences attending his being at the university, though none but what were absolutely unavoidable were incurred, so greatly exceeded what he had conceived they would be, that he dreaded he must be under the necessity of recalling him ere his education was completed, and thus of resigning all the flattering visions in which he had so long indulged. More, he dreaded if this should prove the case, seeing him the prey of discontent and langour—unwilling, from the notions he had probably given him, to enter into any other than the line of life which his unfinished education would then

incapacitate him for. But the above apprehension was not the only source of anxiety and uneasiness Munro now had; he now began to feel unhappy at seeing his daughter, to whom, with the assistance of her mother, he had, without sending her from the paternal roof, given an education suitable to her birth, and what there was every reason to suppose her expectations would have been, if he had not been discarded by his family, literally wasting her sweetness on the desert air, excluded from the amusements suitable to her time of life, and destined, to all appearance, either to marry some person inferior to her, or find herself, on advancing in life, a solitary, unconnected being.

“ Oh God !” he has frequently exclaimed at these moments, when his heart was weighed down with anxiety about his children, “ how maturely should a man weigh every circumstance, ere he enters into a state in which he is liable to incur duties which cannot remain unfulfilled without

without making him feel torture ! How awful is the responsibility that the child attaches to the parent, and yet how often is it thoughtlessly incurred ! Oh ! in how many instances does passion, headlong passion, make man, notwithstanding all his boasted advantages, his reason, his powers of reflection, appear inferior to the creatures who have only instinct for their guide !—he only seems to take no thought for the future, he only who cannot untwist the ties which nature winds around the heart.”

Whatever were the feelings of the young Elizabeth relative to her situation, she carefully confined them to her own bosom ; she clearly saw her parents stood too much in need of consolation, not to endeavour to administer it to them by a constant appearance of chearfulness. She had nearly completed her seventeenth year, at the period her father began to fear his projects, relative to her brother must be relinquished,

linguished, and bore a strong resemblance to her mother, with this difference, that her complexion was fairer, her stature taller, her black eyes still more brilliant and expressive. Her smile evinced the sweetness of her temper, her voice proclaimed the sensibility of her soul, her actions and deportment the goodness of her heart and excellence of her understanding, both of which had been most assiduously cultivated.

She had early been taught the luxury of doing good ; and that a well-improved mind, like a contented heart, was a continual feast—like the woman celebrated in the Proverbs, who cloathed her household in scarlet and purple, she stretched out her hand to the needy, though small the offering her narrow circumstances permitted it to contain ; but she remembered the widow's mite, and small as it was, believed it acceptable in the eyes of heaven. Her mother, who had all that inherent grandeur of soul for which the Spaniards are  
in

in general distinguished, had rendered her somewhat romantic, not only by their conversation, but the studies in which she had indulged her.

Munro, however, was not displeased at this, since he considered romance the parent of enthusiasm ; without a certain portion of which, he believed it scarcely possible any thing great, any thing glorious could be achieved.

Elizabeth had heard of balls, and plays, and courts, and masquerades, and she was certain they must be all delightful ; yet lively as her imagination was, she could not conceive a higher pleasure to be derived from them than she experienced when seated with an entertaining book, the offspring of some vivid and luxuriant fancy, beneath a fresh tree's shade, inhaling the light breeze that whispered through the foliage, literally wafting both health and harmony.

This pleasure was heightened by its being one she could not always indulge in—

in—for Elizabeth had much to do at home; she had been brought up to be useful to herself and others, and the principal management of the household concerns devolved on her, as soon as she was of an age to take it upon herself, her mother having a large share of that indolence which in general characterizes the natives of warm climates, particularly those of the one she came from—and wishing, besides, to give her a perfect knowledge of such affairs, in case she came to have a family of her own.

Equal to her love of literature, and taste for it, was Elizabeth's fondness and taste for rural scenery; she was a perfect devotee of Nature's—a bold and beautiful landscape never failed of inspiring her with a thrilling sensation of delight; nor was there any amusement which afforded her greater gratification than did such contemplations. To range over the slow rising hills—to rest on a rock whence the streamlet distilled—to watch the rising of the  
the

the golden-haired son of the sky—to behold the clouds of night come rolling down upon the dark brown steeps—the stars of the north rising over the waves of the ocean, and shewing their heads of fire through the flying mists of heaven, were all sources of inexpressible delight to her, such as inspired her mind with the most rapturous enthusiasm, and made her heart beat with the most delicious emotions.

The prospects to which she had been accustomed from infancy, early furnished her with ideas of the sublime, and, though in a lesser degree, the beautiful. The blue-fading mountains of the western Highlands—a vast expanse of ocean and immense forests of fir, composed the horizon she was daily in the habit of contemplating; while nearer, the natural wildness of the scenery was here and there varied and restrained by the hand of cultivation.

The house of Munro was an antique rambling mansion, rough on the outside, and plain within; nothing fine, nothing  
gaudy

gaudy was to be seen in any part of it, but in one room fitted up as a chapel for Mrs. Munro, who scrupulously adhered to the faith of her ancestors, and at which a priest, from a neighbouring town, at stated periods officiated.

Mrs. Munro could not forbear expressing a wish to be allowed to bring up her daughter at least in her own persuasion ; but a wish which she relinquished without a murmur, since, though devout, she was not bigotted, on her husband's candidly informing her that the indulgence of it would in all probability render his father more averse than ever to a reconciliation with him, his bigotry being excessive, and of consequence, his dislike to all who either differed, or shewed any indulgence to those who did, in the article of religion from him.

In allowing his daughter to have been educated in the religious tenets of her mother, Munro would have done no violence to his own feelings ; since, though  
decidedly

decidedly of opinion that, from the wavering nature of man, a settled form of religion was necessary for all, he was equally so, that if the heart was sincere in its devotions, it mattered not to God what that form was. In short, various were the roads, he conceived, to heaven; and that the untutored Indian, who fancies he sees God in the clouds, and hears him in the winds, so he performs his allotted part to the best of his abilities, will have an equal chance of happiness with the most enlightened bishop.—But to revert to the house. A few forest trees, of ancient date, cast a shade upon the windows; and it was still further shrowded by a luxuriant shrubbery. Here intermingled the various beauties of

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—————“ Laburnam, rich  
Its streaming gold; syringa iv’ry pure;  
The scented and the scentless rose; this red  
And of an humbler growth, the other tall,  
And throwing up into the darkest gloom  
Of neighb’ring cypress, or more sable yew,

Her

Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf  
That the wind severs from the broken wave ;  
The lilac, various in array, now white,  
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set  
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if  
Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd  
Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all.  
Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,  
But well compensating her sickly looks  
With never-cloying odours, early and late.  
Hypericum all blown, so thick a swarm  
Of flow'rs, like flies cloathing her slender rods,  
That scarce a leaf appears ; mezerion too,  
Though leafless, well attir'd, and thick beset  
With blushing wreaths, investing ev'ry spray,  
Althœa with the purple eye ; the broom,  
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,  
Her blossoms ; and luxuriant above all  
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,  
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf  
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more  
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars."

This luxuriant shrubbery was laid out  
in winding walks, the whole enclosed by  
a neat paling, in which were different  
openings leading to sequestered seats, si-  
tuated

tuated so as to command the most pleasing views of the distant country.

The house stood upon an extensive heath, to the wildness of which the fields and copses, together with the sheltered cots, and here and there cultivated farms, which were discovered at its verge, formed an agreeable contrast. The central track through the heath became lost at some distance from the house, in the tangled mazes of what had formerly been a noble forest, but of which, except a quantity of underwood, no vestiges, save a few venerable trees, now remained; beneath the shadow of whose melancholy boughs, the ruins of a once celebrated abbey were espied, now literally

“ A place of tombs,

Waste, desolate, where ruin dreary dwelt,

Brooding o'er sightless skulls and crumbling bones ;

Ghastful he sat, and eyed with stedfast glare

(Sad trophies of his power, where ivy twines

Its fatal green around) the falling roof,

The time-struck arch, the column grey with moss,

The leaning wall, the sculptur'd stone defac'd,

Whose

Whose monumental flatt'ry, mix'd with dust,  
Now hid the name it vainly meant to raise.  
All was dread silence here and undisturb'd,  
Save what the wind sigh'd, and the wailing owl  
Scream'd solitary to the mournful moon."

The far-extended walls of this edifice, magnificent in decay, and whether tinted with the warm glow of the setting sun, or silvered by the beams of the pale moon, presenting an interesting object to the eye of taste and feeling, gave an adequate idea of the grandeur of its original dimensions, and was still capable of affording a temporary shelter. Amidst the brambles and brushwood that overgrew the ground about it, "grey stones, with their heads of moss," here and there betrayed the narrow houses of death—the graves of those who had long since ceased to converse with mortal men.

This decaying pile was a favourite haunt of Elizabeth's; the whispering echoes which her stealing steps through its long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults awakened,  
where

where once the pealing anthem swelled the note of praise, gave rise to sensations pleasingly awful. The solemn meditations it led to, suited the tender pensiveness of her spirit—a tenderness, a pensiveness increased by the scenes she delighted to frequent; for as an elegant writer has observed—“The lonely mountain and the silent grove seldom fail of increasing the susceptibility of the female bosom.”

Wrapped in these meditations, she not unfrequently wandered about, unmindful of how the minutes waned, till roused to recollection by some harsh note, some discordant cry, the hooting of the owl, or the chattering of the daws, that held their unmolested reign within the ruin. These, however, were not the only inhabitants it had, if the reports of the country people in its vicinity were to be believed. Tradition had given it other tenants, of which superstition did not attempt to dispossess it—indeed it would have been rather unkind and unmannerly to have done

so,

so, as for a considerable time they gave no cause of complaint whatever to their neighbours. But every thing in this life, sooner or later, must have an end, and so had their peaceable behaviour; for just about the period that Munro began to experience such uneasiness about his son, the whole neighbourhood was thrown into a state of confusion and dismay, in consequence of the malicious tricks and vagaries these idle and airy gentry began to play. Willingly would the affrighted rustics have entered into a subscription to defray the expence of sending them to join Pharoah and his host in the Red Sea—but, alas! that they knew not how to set about the matter.

Munro at first imputed their terror to the power of imagination, but a very short time served to convince him, from the testimony of his own senses, that there was some real foundation for it, as once or twice, in passing the now dreaded ruin at rather a late hour, and pausing near it, in consequence of the prevailing report, he

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clearly heard noises from within, well calculated to alarm the unenlightened mind.— This circumstance induced him, more than once, to go over the building in the day-time, and take his station near it at night ; but nothing resulted from this measure, as he had rather hoped and expected would be the case, to enable him to prove, to his rustic neighbours, that their credulity was grossly imposed upon, doubtless for something more than the mere purpose of frightening them.

The consternation gradually became greater, and idleness, gossiping, and inebriety, ensued from it. The alehouses alone had reason to rejoice at the general disturbance and dismay, as, owing to these, they were regularly filled every evening after sunset, and continued so till sunrise. This conduct of the lower rustics was too grievous and alarming to the higher ones, particularly as the harvest was just on the point of commencing, not to give rise to much consultation among them ; but from  
which,

which, owing to want of resolution in some, and obstinacy in others, no good whatever resulted.

Munro, who purposely joined in all their deliberations on the subject, proposed a nightly watch being kept for some time in the abbey; but this proposition was almost unanimously rejected. At length, one evening, a farmer, of the name of Stubbs, whose land joined his, came into a field where he was, and after some little conversation, "Captain," said he, "I have been thinking of what you said about passing a night or two in that crazy old building yonder, which, God forgive me for saying such wicked words, I wish the devil had dropt some of his burning brimstone into long ago, for then we should not have been in such a mess as we are now in about it; and if so be as how you still think it would be a good thing to do, why I am agreeable to doing so along with you; for one may as well—nay, had better run the risk of facing old Nick himself (the Lord

save and defend us from ever seeing his cloven feet or long tail), as let matters go on in this way. There was last night, after being comfortably settled in bed and asleep, I was forced to get up to go and pen the sheep myself, because the boy that looks a'ter them could neither be made to do so by fair or by foul means; flat and plain, he told his mistress the devil might pen them for him—he wouldn't run the risk of his life or his senses by going a'ter them to the ruin, about which they were feeding—not he, for the best wether in the flock."

Munro assured the farmer he was as well inclined as ever to do what he had proposed, as a probable means of detecting the nocturnal disturbers of the abbey. He advised him, however, to keep their intention a profound secret, which the other readily promised; and it was agreed that they should go thither that very night, as soon as darkness had spread its raven wings over the hemisphere. This agreement

Munro

Munro could not think of concealing from his family, well knowing the uneasiness his absence from home for a night would occasion, if they could not account for it.— At the appointed hour Stubbs called upon him, and both immediately proceeded on their secret expedition. Munro armed with a sword, and his companion with a pitch-fork, as the weapon he was best accustomed to, but which for the present was laid across a basket of provisions, that, together with a dark lanthorn, he carried.

Munro had scarcely entered the desolated pile, ere its cold and dampness struck a chill to his heart, as did its darkness to that of the farmer. What the latter did not like, he never patiently endured, except compelled to do so ; he therefore never ceased groping about till he had collected a sufficient quantity of sticks and rotten wood, to form a large pile in the stone hall in which they were, and to which (notwithstanding all the remon-

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strances

strances of Munro, who represented to him the little probability there was of their being able to make any discovery, if they exposed themselves to detection, as they must inevitably do, by surrounding themselves with light) he set fire.

“Why dang it—dang it, Captain,” cried the farmer, rubbing his head as soon as he had satisfied himself, “’tis bad enough in any way to be here; but to be so in the cold and dark, would be more than any one could put up with. I am sure you may be glad I have lit a fire, for you look as cold and as blue, as the saying is, as a calf of a frosty morning. Besides, Captain, if there was any thing to be seen, how the duce could we see it without light?”

“True, true, my friend,” replied Munro with affected gravity; “I see you are at no loss for sound argument to support the propriety of what you do.”

“Why yes,” cried the farmer, with a look of the most perfect self-complacency,

ency, "why yes," his broad features distended by a smile of mingled satisfaction and importance, and giving what he called a knowing look, "I think I know what I am about, but I shouldn't be vain—noa ! noa !" shaking his head, "I should not indeed; for it is my poor father, God rest his soul, I may thank for being what I am, for he gave me good learning as soon as I could take it. I was for two years and three months at a school, at the rate of a crown a-quarter, kept by——"

"Oh well," said Munro, perhaps not consciously interrupting him, "the expence was not thrown away."

"No, no, that's what father said.—'Boy,' he has often and often said, 'I don't grudge what I have laid out upon your learning, because I see as how you takes to it.'—Just as you and I, Captain, said last autumn, about our two corn-fields that cost us so much to manure.—'We don't grudge,' says we, 'the expence these here fields have cost us in manuring, be-

cause they have yielded us such a plentiful crop this season."

On each side of the yawning chasm in which Stubbs had kindled the fire, a kind of rude and partly-demolished bench projected a little way into the hall, on which he and his companion seated themselves opposite one another; the basket of provisions, containing a jar of strong ale, ham, cheese, and bread, was unpacked and placed between them, and they soon fell to upon its contents. But though the farmer had recourse to every method in his power to keep up his spirits, and continued to talk boldly, it was evident to Munro that he gradually began to grow faint-hearted: this, however, he did not pretend to see, trusting, that by giving him credit for courage, he should inspirit him sufficiently to enable him to retain, at least, the semblance of it.—That a scene more calculated than the present to affect a mind inclined to superstition, could not well be found, he could not help acknowledging  
to

to himself, and of course, in some degree, excusing the gradual evaporation of poor Stubbs's valour. The building was not only known to be remote from every inhabited one, but the wind made a hollow and a moaning noise throughout it, that might well at times have been mistaken for the sighings and lamentations of distress: a shattered staircase descended to the hall, above which all appeared involved in ruin, mystery, and darkness; while, on the green and slimy walls, the quivering and uncertain light threw shadows more fantastic than any but the most disordered imagination could possibly have given birth to.

"It is a cheerless spot indeed," said he, after a short interval of silence, during which his eye had been busily employed in looking about him; "many years, I doubt, have elapsed since any thing like social comfort has before been seen in it."

"Yes, and many more, should it last so long, will pass away, ere any thing of

the like will be seen again in it," replied the farmer; "for I am beginning to think, Captain, that ghost-watching is not the most agreeable employment in the world; and as to my neighbours, I needn't say what their opinion on the subject is."

"The speedy detection of those who occasioned them so much uneasiness, will, I trust, render any further watching unnecessary," answered Munro.

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## CHAP. II.

“Heav’n has to all allotted, soon or late,  
Some lucky revolutions of their fate,  
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill,  
(For human good depends on human will),  
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,  
And from the first impression takes the bent;  
But, if unseiz’d, she glides away like wind,  
And leaves repenting Folly far behind.”

DRYDEN.

“NOW that we are upon the subject of ghosts and hobgoblins, and such like trumpery, pray may I ask you, Captain, (for I know you are a good scholar, and have seen a good deal of the world, and can, therefore, give an opinion on these matters one may depend on), do you think,” cried the farmer, making an effort,

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but

but a vain one, the bench being fastened to the ground, to pull his seat nearer to Munro, "that a man, having all the Christian duties paid to his remains, such as having a good coffin given to him, and being laid in a snug grave, either has a right to, or can come back to disturb his neighbours, which, God knows, perhaps, he did sufficiently while living?"

"With God nothing is impossible," replied Munro, in a solemn tone; "but it seems most improbable, to a mind of sense and reflection at least, that a Being of mercy and benevolence, such as he is represented, such as all his works testify him to be, such as daily experience and observation convince us he is, for who is there that has not felt his manifold mercies and loving-kindness, should permit his creatures to be needlessly tormented; it is, therefore, my firm, my immutable opinion, that the spirit once returned unto God, who gave it, it revisits this nether scene no more, "to make night hideous, and us——"

"Aye,

“Aye, aye,” eagerly interrupted the farmer, “you may well say that, indeed—to make night hideous—well, well, this is comfortable—this is comfortable,” wiping his forehead (which was rather a little damp at the moment, but whether from the heat of the fire, or whether from the oozing out of his valour, cannot be determined), with the corner of his coloured neckcloth; “I shall tell my folks at home what you have said, in hopes it may have some effect upon them; for, if a mouse does but scratch now in the cupboard, or a bat flit across the room, Lord, there is such a kick-up in a moment, that one would be tempted to think Bedlam was broke loose.”

They continued to converse with very little intermission, but much against the inclination of Munro, as too much silence could not, he conceived, be observed, for the enabling them to accomplish the purpose which had brought them to the building. The farmer, however, derived a kind of false courage, from hearing the sound  
of

of his own voice and his companion's, which rendered him regardless of the remonstrances Munro made on the subject. At length, after a long sitting, and when the contents of the basket, and the fire, and light in the lanthorn, were nearly exhausted, the farmer, whose patience was also by the same time equally so, proposed their breaking up watch for that night: to which proposal Munro, who, from the conduct the farmer had pursued, had no idea of their being able to effect any discovery, was on the point of acquiescing, when a tremendous noise, immediately over their heads, resembling that which thunder makes when rumbling over a building, arrested his words. He started, grasped his sword with firmness, and looked around him; while the eyes of the farmer began to stare, his teeth to chatter, and his complexion to assume a livid hue. The rumbling noise over head continued for some minutes, and was then succeeded by shrieks, or rather yells, of a most terrific nature, such as  
torture

torture alone could be supposed to occasion.

“ Oh, Captain, Captain !” cried the farmer, on hearing these appalling sounds, and starting from the bench to which terror had at first rivetted him—“ Oh, Captain, Captain !” extending his arms towards him.

Munro raised his finger significantly to motion him to silence ; the next instant he heard the stairs creaking, he glanced his quick eye upwards, and at the head perceived a tall skeleton-like figure, enveloped in what appeared to be a winding-sheet, and surrounded by a pale luminous light. He instantly snatched up the lantern, and darted to the staircase, forgetful of its shattered state ; scarcely, however, had he set his foot on it, ere he was reminded of this by the failure of one of the steps, and but that he caught, as it gave way, at a banister, he must have fallen through the chasm he had thus made. He now recollected what sudden emotion had

before rendered him forgetful of, that, at the side of the staircase, there was a door leading to a narrow shelving passage, ending at a flight of winding steps, which he doubted not having a communication with the apartments above; he therefore hastened onward, and had just reached them, when the frightful apparition he was in quest of rushed down them, and passing him with the quickness of lightning, vanished through a small space at the side of the passage which a door had once occupied. Munro pursued, and found himself in a small square stone room, half sunk under ground, and which he perfectly recollected having examined before, but without being able to discover more than one inlet into it. Again he went round it, feeling, as he did so, all along the walls, but without meeting with any thing to impede the progress of his hand. After a little deliberation, he determined on pursuing this adventure no further for the present, since he could not avoid thinking his doing so incompatible with

with his safety, alone and unaided as he was; besides, he doubted not the farmer being in want of his assistance. He accordingly hastened back to the hall, where he found him exactly in the same spot in which he had left him, his pitchfork presented, his eyes staring wildly, his hair upright, every feature, in short, betokening horror and dismay. Munro shook him several times by the shoulder, and then made him swallow some ale which fortunately remained; this brought him a little to himself, and after heaving a deep sigh, or rather groan, and wiping his damp forehead—"Well, Captain, well," cried he, "did you catch it?" Munro informed him of the issue of the adventure. "The Lord have mercy upon us!" cried he, after hearing it—"Captain, Captain, let us be going; but don't ye think, don't ye, that I'm afraid—no, no, if I had been so, instead of keeping my ground here, as you yourself saw I did, I should have kept at your heels."

"Oh,

“Oh, no doubt,” cried Munro encouragingly; “but come, as you say, my good friend, let us be off, for we shall make no further discovery here to-night, I am sure. Take my advice, and keep what we have seen a secret, or else things will be worse than ever; and also take my word for it, that the spirit we saw this night is one enveloped in wicked flesh and blood, to which, I most sincerely hope, you may yet have an opportunity of giving a good ducking in your horse-pond, since I can scarcely think any punishment too severe for the person who wantonly sports with the feelings of his fellow-creatures.”

The farmer readily promised the secrecy he desired, but by his silence relative to what he had said of the apparition, evidently proved he could not be persuaded to be of his opinion respecting it. They quitted the building, and Munro saw his companion safely housed ere he parted from him.

The next day he re-examined the abbey  
more

more narrowly than he had ever done before, but without being able to discover the traces of any human beings, but the farmer and himself, having been lately in it. He again proposed having a watch kept there for a few nights, but the proposal was now so universally negatived, and his wife and daughter expressed such uneasiness at the idea of his going thither again at such a time, that he gave up all intention of doing so.

His anxiety about his son now daily increased, as every day tended still further to convince him of the impracticability of keeping him much longer at the University, except some unexpected change took place in his circumstances, of which he had not the remotest expectation; no, his prospects were now, on every side, cheerless and barren; and, by degrees, his incessant contemplation of them made him acquire an abstracted manner, and a look of moody care, which drew upon him the observations of his neighbours, and excited  
various

various conjectures among them as to the cause of it; some thought one thing, some another; all agreed, however, that it must be something very grievous which thus weighed upon him.

Farmer Stubbs, who, whatever may be thought to the contrary, was (ghosts and such like trumpery, as he styled them, out of the question) not only one of the bravest but honestest of men, saw and thought as much as his neighbours, but, unlike them, remained silent with respect both to his remarks and surmises, it being a maxim with him, that a man has no right to busy himself, unasked, about the affairs of another. He had somehow (doubtless from that secret sympathy which, be their education ever so different, exists between worthy hearts), contracted a vast liking for the Captain, he said, such as at any time would have made him fight for him through thick and thin; and it now vexed him to the soul, though he said nothing about the matter, to see him drooping his head, like  
a blighted

a blighted ear of corn, and going about as if crazed with care.

One evening, as this honest farmer was digging in a field, he was joined by a neighbour of the name of Watkins, a sly, cunning, canting man, of Methodistical manners and appearance, who, though he professed to love good works above all things, was supposed to love good cheer better; and who, having by some means or other (not altogether to his credit, if the report of the goddess who blew the brazen trump in the little village of Heathwood was to be believed) scraped together sufficient to permit him to indulge his propensity for idleness, the offspring of a creeping, grovelling disposition, passed much of his time in running about to collect news of his neighbours, which he detailed with the utmost avidity, especially if it was of an unfavourable nature, as he was quite as malicious and envious as he was greedy and hypocritical.

Against Munro he had what is vulgarly  
called

called a particular grudge, owing to his having espoused, and finally enabled her to triumph over him, the cause of a poor widow, who, by some unexpected casualty, had fallen into his power; as also on account of his having repulsed the efforts he made to be on familiar terms with him and his family.

Stubbs, who had but little notion of ceremony, and who, moreover, did every thing but hate Watkins, for to do that he knew would be unchristian-like, took no notice whatever of his approach, but continued digging away as if he had seen no one. Watkins, who knew him well, and stood much in dread of him, so much, indeed, that he did every thing he could think of as likely to conciliate his regard, attempted not to interrupt him by speaking, till he paused to take breath; he then, after "A fine evening, neighbour, a fine evening," added, with what he intended for an approving smile—"I see thou dost not eat the bread of idleness."

"No,"

“No,” replied Stubbs, as, after rubbing his hand against his waistcoat, he dug his spade, with the assistance of his foot, again into the ground, “no, ’tis bad bread for any one.”

“Truly thou sayest right in saying so; those who hanker after it will surely meet with punishment.”

“Doubtless, doubtless,” returned the farmer, again applying his foot to the spade.

“I say, neighbour,” resumed Watkins, after a short pause—“I say,” twitching him by the sleeve, and pointing with his thumb over his left shoulder towards the house of Munro, conspicuous from the spot on which they were, “some folks yonder will soon repent, if they already don’t, having indulged themselves in it.”

“Well, what’s that to you?” replied the other, but without seeming to understand who he alluded to; “you won’t be obliged also to repent for their having done so.”

“Me! no, God forbid that any of us should

should be obliged to answer for the sins or indiscretions of others!"

"Why, I believe," and Stubbs leered a little sily at the demure and sanctified-looking Watkins, "it would be a bad job for some folks if they were, seeing as how they are loaded with so heavy a burthen of their own."

"But I say, neighbour," cried Watkins, eagerly returning to the subject, for the purpose of discussing which with him, he had alone sought out Stubbs—"I say, you must lately have seen something wrong in the house of the Captain, as he is called, though why he should, since not receiving the king's pay, I can't tell?"

"No, not I," replied Stubbs, without seeming to notice this last observation—"not I," digging away; "what should I see wrong in it? have the rats eat through the walls?"

"The rats!—ha! ha!—No—yet, nevertheless, the prop, the main beam, the grand support of the building, is, I think,  
going

going fast; but thou dost not, perhaps," observing the other suddenly suspend his labour, and regard him with a kind of vacant stare, "understand metaphorical language; I will, therefore, explain—Thou must know, then, that the Captain (I know I should not please thee if I styled him otherwise) has brought himself into such trouble, by trying to bring up his son as a gentleman, that I should not wonder if he soon went the way of all flesh," and he pointed with his finger to the ground, "he frets, and takes on so—for which, verily, I should pity him, but that I think his pride merits chastisement: for what but pride, his wishing to have his brats hold their heads, like himself, above the honest folks about them, could have made him think of sending his son to the University forsooth, knowing, as to be sure he must, he hadn't a shilling, nor a chance of getting a shilling, to give him?"

"Has he asked you," demanded Stubbs, "to help him to pay for his being there?"

“Me! no truly, it would be strange if he had, being, as I am, of no kindred to him.”

“Then, since he has not, I see no right you have to trouble yourself about the matter, for I suppose you’ll allow every one has a right to do what they please with their own?”

“Yea, truly, I grant it; but, notwithstanding a man may give an opinion about another.”

“To be sure—to be sure he may,” cried Stubbs; “but, by goles, he had sometimes better not.”

“Nay, verily this is the land of liberty,” said the other, waxing a little, very little warm, for he was a peaceable man when in company, as was the case at present, with any one he was afraid of, “and a man may, therefore, say what he pleases.”

“No, there you are out,” cried Stubbs; “he mayn’t talk treason, let him like to do so never so much; and, I believe,” looking significantly at Watkins, who was shrewdly suspected

suspected of Jacobinical principles, "I know some folks who would well enough."

"Pho, every fool knows that! But, as I was saying, it goes so heavily now with the Captain, that truly I should not wonder if he soon broke his heart, or," and he drew his hand across his throat—"you understand me—the unrighteous have ever a bad end."

"The unrighteous!—And who told you Captain Munro was an unrighteous man?"

"Why, hath he not been cast off by the father who begot him?"

"Yes, but there are unnatural fathers."

"But, I tell thee, old Squire Munro had reason to throw off his son, for he wasted his substance in riotous living, and brought the grey hairs of his mother with sorrow to the grave."

"You tell me! but who told you? Amongst the things," continued Stubbs, suddenly sticking his spade into the earth, putting his arms akimbo, and advancing nearer to the other, "you have heard of

men's eating, have you ever heard, neighbour Watkins, of their eating their own words?"

"Why, verily no," cried the other, stepping a little backward, "I can't say, neighbour Stubbs, that I have."

"Then I have," resumed Stubbs; "and, what is more, I have often made a man do so; and, what is more again, I havn't lost the knack yet by which I did so," and he nodded his head with meaning to him, and returned to his spade.

"I protest thou art a facetious man," cried Watkins, returning in a few minutes to the spot from which he had just made a retrograde motion.

"Not always—I am not facetious now," said the other in rather a surly tone.

"And why art thou not? I have not angered thy spirit, I hope—verily, if I have, it was without intending, for I only meant to have a little harmless gossip with thee."

"I don't like gossip," in the same surly tone he had just spoken in; "'tis only fit for  
women

women and maudlin men; if you want any more, therefore, you had better go off to your wife, and I take it you'll have enough; and, hearkee, by the bye, tell her she had better not let that old turkey-cock of her's be ranging about at large, as he has done for some time past, scaring all the women and children—there's not a girl in the parish can wear a bit of pink ribbon for him; and, as to my dame, she's mad as the duece, because she can't wear the red petticoat her daughter sent her a present of, for fear of him. Dang me, if the old bully comes in my way, if I don't hit him a stounder shall make him look about him."

"That would not be right nor seemly—thy neighbour's land-mark," added Watkins in a nasal tone, "or thy neighbour's cattle, thou should'st not touch."

"Why, as to touching his land-mark, by which I take it you mean his hedges and stakes, I should do no such thing, because I think to do so would be roguish, and, moreover, might bring me into trouble;

but, as to giving any of his cattle a douse in the chops, if they affronted me, I should make no more bones of doing so, than I would to my neighbour himself, if he did the same."

"Yet it is a bad thing to smite a man; the Lord delighteth to behold brethren dwelling together in unity, in that good peace and fellowship, which, I trust, neighbour Stubbs, will ever exist between us, for I like thee much; thou art a man of a pleasant countenance, and thy discourse also is pleasant: why wilt not thou and thy spouse let me and my wife have more of thy company? we do desire it much."

"I have something else to do than to company keep; and, as to my dame, why, haven't I told you already of that old black-guard sentinel of a turkey-cock you keep strutting before your door; you don't suppose she wants to be gobbled up as Tom Thumb was?"

"Ha! ha! you maketh me of a cheerful spirit—truly I did not know, till now, the  
bird

bird was so troublesome to the maidens; if he doth not deport himself better for the future, I shall rebuke him."

"Rebuke him!—O Lord! O Lord!" cried Stubbs, seized with an immoderate fit of laughter, and supporting himself with the spade; "and so you didn't know that, like yourself, he was running after the maidens?"

"Fye, neighbour, fye! I run after them! no:—I can't deny but I like the damsels, but then it is——"

"Come, come, don't burthen your poor soul with any more lies this day—if you never did worse than like a pretty girl, why no one could say bad of you except they lied."

"I know not that any one speaketh ill of me."

"No! why then in time, perhaps, you'll be wiser."

"Neighbour," cried Watkins, "I like not dark sayings; let me know who speaketh

evil of me, that I may bring an action against them, and obtain damages."

"No, I'll never put it in any one's power, if I can help it, to make a man pay for telling the truth," replied Stubbs, with the utmost coolness.

"Truth!" vexedly repeated Watkins.

"Yes; and now that we are upon the subject of truth, pray may I make just so bold as to ask you, who told you that Captain Munro was in trouble for having sent his son to the University?"

Watkins hesitated to reply.

"Oh, if you don't give me an author for what you have said, I shan't believe a word of it."

Watkins still hesitated; but, at length, rather than have his veracity doubted, and himself perhaps brought into trouble for the supposed fabrication of a falsehood, proceeded to say it was his niece, who lived as servant at the Captain's.

"And pray how came she by her knowledge

ledge of his uneasiness?" asked Stubbs. "I take it, neither the Captain, nor any of his family, made her their confidant."

"No, to be sure not," Watkins replied, "but she had ears."

"Which she applied to the key-hole," resumed Stubbs, with quickness. "I wish to the Lord that Old Nick, who tempted her to do so, had nailed them to it! this is the way in which so much mischief is done in the world, peaceable people set by the ears, and innocent characters destroyed; for what an eaves-dropper cannot hear they will make out, out of their own wicked heads, that they may have a story to tell. Shame, shame unto those who hearken to them! they are, like the receiver of stolen goods, worse than the thief himself. You who pretend to be so good, and so pious, and so discreet, to encourage a young thing, like your niece, in such shameless doings! why you may just as well encourage her to give away his property, his meat, and his drink, and his coals, and

his candles, as to pry into his secrets and betray them. By the Lord, if a wench belonging to me was to bring me such tattle, I'd give her chops a boxing that should make them tingle for hours! I am John Bull—I was born on the other side of the Tweed—and I like to speak my mind."

"But how dost thou know I encouraged my niece to speak of her master?"

"How do I know! why, if you didn't, wouldn't you have stopped her mouth the moment she attempted to open it about his affairs? But I know the reason you are so anxious to pry into his concerns; I know 'tis in hopes of discovering some ill, some evil of him, for you hate him—yes, I know your heart is full of spite and malice against him, and I know also for why. But you'll spit them forth in vain against him," and with violence Stubbs again drove his spade into the ground—"yes, in vain, I say, for the Lord will uphold the good against the machinations of the wicked; and Captain Munro is good; yes, he is a just man—he  
gives

gives to every one their due; he speaks ill of no one; out of his little he giveth to the poor; he has brought up his children to fear God, to honour the king, and to love their neighbours—that is, I suppose,” said the Farmer, a little hesitatingly, “such as he thinks deserving of their love; and what can any man do more? He, therefore, that wishes ill to such a man is a scoundrel; he who speaks ill of him is a liar, and a back-biter, and a slanderer. Go, go,” he added, after a pause, occasioned by the fulness of his heart, indignantly waving his hand as he spoke—“go, go, I am quite ashamed of you, quite ashamed to find one, who, from his knowledge of holy writ, knows his duty to his neighbour so well, performs it so badly: ’tis such hypocritical fellows as you who bring religion and the holy word of God into disrepute; for the wicked would never scoff at piety, but that they too often see those who pretend to it following the ways of unrighteousness. Go, go, take yourself to task; and, instead of saying

godly things, strive to do godly things, for words are but wind, but by our actions we must stand or fall—the angel of the Lord marks them all down upon a table, at which he will look at the last day.”

Watkins attempted to say something; but the indignation with which Stubbs turned from him, soon made him close his lips, and take himself quickly and quietly off.

As soon as he was out of sight Stubbs ceased his digging, which he had recommenced with violence, and remained for some minutes in a thoughtful attitude leaning on his spade—the exclamation of —“ Oh, ’tis a scurvy, scurvy world!” then burst from him, as, drawing it out of the earth, he threw it over his shoulder and proceeded home.

The confirmation he had received of Munro’s unhappiness, as also the cause of that unhappiness, deeply affected him; for he was a father, a tender father himself, and judged of the anguish he must experience,

at the idea of not being able to give his children the advantages he desired for them, by that which his own feelings as a parent convinced him he should have felt, if unable to have sent his family into the world properly qualified for their stations in it—"But the worst of all," muttered he to himself between his closed teeth, as, but not as cheerily as usual, he pursued his way homewards, "is the thought of such a mean fellow as that Watkins, yet perhaps being able to hold his head above such a real gentleman, such a kind and worthy-hearted man as Captain Munro is. Dang me!" and he suddenly clenched his hand, "if any evil happens to the poor gentleman, and that scoundrel attempts to crow over him—But evil will not happen unto him; the Lord hath promised he will not forsake those that put their trust in him, and I am sure Captain Munro does. He may seem to forsake them for a season, in order to try them; for trials are, 'tis said, for the heart, like what the furnace is for gold,

gold, necessary to purify it; but he will turn his face again towards them, if they still continue to call upon him."

About this time there arrived in the neighbourhood a nobleman of the title of O'Sinister, who had an old, but magnificent seat in it, to which he came but seldom—so seldom, that this was his first visit to it since Munro had settled at Heathwood.

A few evenings after the conversation just recounted, Farmer Stubbs called on Munro, just as he was sitting down to tea with the ladies; he was invited to take a cup, or some other refreshment, but declined either, saying he had only made bold to call on the Captain for a few brocoli plants, which he had promised to give him the day before. Munro recollected the promise, and took him into the garden the moment tea was over. They had not got many paces from the house when the farmer, suddenly stopping, seized Munro by a button of his coat, and, after looking earnestly in his face for an instant—"Captain,"

tain," said he, "the brocoli plants were but a fetch to get you from the ladies—I have something for your private ear."

"Well, my friend," returned Munro, "recovering from the surprise his so suddenly stopping and taking hold of him had caused, "I am all attention."

"You must know then," resumed the farmer, "that—od's rabbit it!" cried he, rubbing his hands, and looking with a discontented air, after pausing a few minutes; "od's rabbit it! I find, after all, I must tell you a story I hate to think of."

"Then the sooner you get over it the better, my friend," said Munro—"so proceed."

The farmer testified, by a nod, being of his opinion, and then proceeded to give the purport of his recent conversation with Watkins; which Munro did not hear without much emotion, though without making any comments on it.—"For the life of me," proceeded Stubbs, "I could not drive from my mind the pain I felt at the thoughts

of your being obliged, for I knew how unhappy it must make you, to take that fine youth, Mr Osmond, from the University before his education was finished. I won't say what I wished and wished; because, in my mind, when a man can only wish, speaking of his goodnature is but like a vain boast. This morning, as I was still brooding over what Farmer Watkins told me, I got a summons to attend my Lord O'Sinister, who, you know, is lately arrived in these parts—It was all along of his Lordship that father and I settled on this side the Tweed; but his Lordship being desirous of having his land cultivated here after our English fashion, never rested till he got father and I (seeing as how we were reckoned as good agriculturists as any in the kingdom) to give up a farm we rented from him in Derbyshire for one here—But, as I was saying, I was summoned to him; and, after he had asked me a power of questions about this part and that part of his land,

and

and so on, and made much of me, for though a lord, and a marvellous proud man, he can be very courteous; and the prouder a rich man is to his equals, why the more pleased a poor man is with his affability to himself——”

“No doubt, no doubt,” cried Munro, finding the farmer paused, and looked as if he expected him to say something.

“Well, after my Lord, as I said, had made much of me,” resumed the farmer, “he began to question me about this here farm of yours, which you must know, perhaps you do already, once belonged to him, but was sold to a friend who wanted to be qualified for a company in the county militia, from whose hands, he being a sad spendthrift, it soon passed into others, and so on, till at length, all tattered and torn, as one may say, it came into your’s. ‘Farmer,’ says he, ‘who owns Heathwood Farm? has it got into any thing of better hands than it was in when I was last here?’

“Has it! repeated I; so then I tells him  
how

how that it had, and all about what you did for it. ‘And who is this Captain or Mr. Munro, that you tell me is so clever in the management of land?’ said he; so I also told him that, and, from thence, he began to ask me question after question concerning you. At first I was a little shyish or so of answering him, for I don’t much like, nor never did, talking of other people’s affairs; till, at length, pop it came into my head, all of a sudden, that, perhaps, as I had told him what a worthy gentleman, and what a good subject, and a good man altogether you were, he might, if I also told him how you were straightened a little bit or so in your circumstances, lend a hand to help you; and so, the thought had no sooner entered my brain, than out came every thing I knew, aye, and moreover, every thing I thought of you.”

“Every thing!” involuntarily echoed Munro, scarcely knowing whether to be pleased or displeased.

“Aye,

“Aye, by goles!” cried the farmer; “when once I began to tell him how your father had used you, and what a different one you were yourself, I couldn’t have stopped myself for the life of me. But, Captain,” suddenly changing his tone of exultation into one of submission, “I hope you don’t take amiss what I did; it was not for the sake of tattling; I have already said I spoke of your affairs, but merely in hopes of getting you a friend, because I had not the power of being such a one to you myself as I knew you wanted and deserved.”

These words determined the feelings of Munro; he eagerly grasped the hand of the farmer—“My friend, my friend,” he said, perhaps not as articulately as he had just before spoken, “I believe you; and you are, therefore, entitled to my gratitude, be the result of your communication respecting me what it may. But I trust Lord O’Sinister could not imagine you were set on to speak of me—I confess it  
would

would hurt me if I thought he did, as at any time I would rather make a direct than an indirect application for a kindness."

"Bless you, he think a thing of the kind! not he indeed; it must have been clear enough to him, even if he had less sense than he has, that what I told him of you was all of a sudden thought."

"Well, did he make any observation upon it?"

"You shall hear—'Farmer,' says he, laying down a cup of coffee he was raising to his mouth, 'you have affected me much, by what you have told me of your worthy friend, Captain Munro; and I promise you,' says he, 'it shan't be my fault if he and I are not better acquainted; for,' says he, (and he laid his hand, which I do verily think to be as white as Mrs. Munro's, or Miss Elizabeth's, but which, to be sure is no marvel, seeing as how, in the course of his whole life, I don't suppose he ever did as much

as

as brush a hat for himself); 'for,' says he, 'my heart warms to a character of his kind—but how should it not, seeing as how it is so like my own; yes, there is too great an analogy,' yes, that was the word, 'between his and mine, not to make me feel an interest for him'—a sympathy too I think he said, but indeed I won't be positive, for I did not entirely comprehend the meaning of all his words; for though, as I have already said, I got a good education, I didn't go as far as the words that are of Roman and Grecian extraction, I think they call it, as they say all the hard ones are. So," continued the farmer, "after thinking a little on the subject, I thought it would only be right and proper to come and let you know what passed between my Lord and me concerning you, lest, if I did not, you might be taken at a nonplus by him."

"Certainly, my friend, it was right I should be acquainted with it; and I thank you for the consideration that induced you

to

to make the disclosure, as also for the kind interest you take in my concerns."

"And you are not in the least angry with me?" asked Stubbs, with an anxious look and in a corresponding tone.

"Angry! how could you suppose it possible I could be angry with a person I look upon as a sincere friend? No, the motive with me is every thing—he of whose wishing to serve me I was assured, would be entitled to my gratitude, even though he mistook the way."

"Ah, yours is an honest, honest heart, Captain!" cried the farmer; "and I trust it will soon be a joyful one; however, I say nothing positive about my Lord; he may think, and he mayn't think more about what he said—he—in short what I would say is, that it is a bad thing to reckon one's chickens before they are hatched."

"I understand you, my friend; but don't fear that I shall draw disappointment upon myself, by being too sanguine in my hopes—the season for castle-building is past."

"No,

“No, I don’t fear your doing any thing that is foolish,” replied the farmer, “which to be sure it is to place too great a dependance on the promise of any man, that is, of any great man I mean, seeing as how they are all bits of courtiers in their hearts, I believe: but good night, Captain; if nothing comes of what has passed, why you are only still as you were, and, if there does, why then we’ll sing, Oh, be joyful, and drive old Care away.”

The reflections to which his conference with the farmer gave rise, prevented Munro from returning to the parlour on his leaving him. Wrapt in thought, musing on the consequences which might result from the farmer’s communication respecting him to Lord O’Sinister, he continued, till roused from it by his wife and daughter joining him. A fear of awaking hopes there was no certainty of having realized, forbade his touching on the subject on which he and the farmer had been conversing. The garden in which  
they

they had joined him was the favourite scene of all at the close of day—here they delighted, amidst the fragrance of exhaling plants and flowers, to watch the sun gradually fading from the summits of the mountains, the evening yielding the world to night; and to listen to the soft and expiring sounds, so well according with the fading scenery, and ever, in the country, the certain precursor of the weary labourer's hour of repose. Hither Elizabeth frequently brought her guitar or harp, from both of which she had been taught by her mother to draw the most exquisite tones, such as sensibility could not hear without emotion.

The kind of sylvan wildness which prevailed in the garden, was what rendered it so particularly pleasing to its owners; it was large, and encompassed with steep banks, completely overspread with shrubwood, and topped in many places with old thorns, hollies, and blackberry bushes; contiguous to the house it was laid out for flowers;  
the

the centre was devoted to vegetables; and at the extremity was an orchard, interspersed with hazel copses: a little rill here wildly meandered through the soil, till it came to a deep hollow beneath a jutting rock, into which it fell, forming a spacious pool of limpid water, planted round with ozers, in the soft but incessant rustling of which there is something of the melancholy sound of the Æolian harp; nor can this be wondered at, since the same invisible musician plays on both.

The next morning, while at breakfast, the following note was delivered to Munro:

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*To Robert Munro, Esq.*

“ SIR,

“ It was but yesterday I had the pleasure of hearing I had a neighbour of your description; the moment I was apprized of the agreeable circumstance, I should have hastened to pay my compliments

to you, but for a sudden attack of the gout, which prevents me, at present, quitting the house; my confinement to it, however, I shall less regret than would otherwise be the case, if you will now and then favour me with your society. The pleasure of your company to dinner to-day, at five o'clock, will confer a particular obligation on,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ O’SINISTER.”

*Firgrove,  
Friday Morning.*

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It may readily be imagined Munro had no hesitation in accepting this polite invitation; still, however, he confined to his own bosom the hopes it tended to confirm, lest, after all, they should be disappointed.

At the appointed hour he repaired to Firgrove, and was ushered into a sumptuous

tuous drawing-room, where he was presently joined by the Peer, in his morning gown and flannel shoes, for which undress illness was his apology. His Lordship appeared about fifty, and was, both in manners and appearance, the finished gentleman—to all the politeness of the old school uniting all the ease of the new one. His features, though somewhat injured by time, were still handsome; and there was an animation and keenness in his countenance, which proved him still in possession of all the mental vigour of youth, and endowed with no small share of penetration; he had literally indeed, as Shakespeare says, a hawking eye, such as seemed calculated to dive into the very recesses of the heart.

His reception of Munro was truly flattering—they dined *tête-à-tête*; and, during dinner, and for a short time after the attendants were withdrawn, the politics of the day, the liberal methods lately devised for the encouragement of agriculture, and

other useful arts, were the topics they principally discussed. The conversation then, in consequence of a question or two from the Peer to Munro, relative to his connections in Scotland, became more particular and interesting; till at length the former, but in the most delicate manner, hinted to his guest his perfect knowledge of the cruelty and injustice he had met with from his family, and his ardent wish to render him a service.

Notwithstanding Munro's expectation of something of this nature, his emotion was quite as great at the moment as if he had not entertained one of the kind.

"Good Heaven!" he involuntarily and mentally exclaimed, "in how many unexpected ways does Providence interfere for man! how little, when listening to the rough effusions of Farmer Stubbs's honest heart, did I imagine I should ever be indebted to him for a powerful friend!"

With all the warmth of gratitude he thanked the Peer for his proffered kindness;

ness; and now, the ice being broke, his situation was freely and candidly discussed. The result of this discussion was, Lord O'Sinister's insisting that Mr. Osmond should in future be considered his care, continued at the University for the usual time, and immediately instructed to commence the study of divinity, for the purpose of qualifying himself for a living of considerable value in the gift of his Lordship, and the incumbent of which was at this time so far advanced in life, that it might reasonably be expected it would soon become vacant.

"And now, my worthy Sir," cried Lord O'Sinister, when this matter was settled, looking at Munro, with a countenance beaming with the satisfaction of a well-pleased mind, "how can I serve you?"

"Oh, my Lord, in serving my son you serve me," replied the greatly agitated Munro.

"Well, well, that may be," returned the Peer, smilingly, "but I never approved of  
F 3 parents

parents being dependent on their children, new connections but too frequently causing old one's to be neglected; not, I confess, with impunity, but the hour of remorse often arrives too late; so tell me what kind of situation you would like, for I cannot think your present laborious one of a farmer, so ill according with your former habits, can be pleasing to you."

"It certainly neither is or ever was, my Lord, but necessity is an arbitrary power, at whose shrine inclination is often obliged to be immolated."

"What say you to returning to your former profession?"

Munro started, and remained silent for a few minutes—"My Lord," he then said, "I will be very candid with you; I should be very unwilling to enter into a situation that would be liable to separate me from my family, as a military one certainly would, or else oblige me to expose them to difficulties and dangers they are not accustomed to,"

"You

“You entirely mistook my meaning,” cried Lord O’Sinister with quickness, “if you thought I had an idea of offering any thing to your acceptance that would reduce you to the alternative of either leaving your family, or else introducing them into scenes of danger—what I meant was, merely to know whether, if a military appointment that would not render you liable to be ordered abroad could be procured for you, you would have any objection to accept it—for instance, an adjutancy of militia?”

“The thing, of all others, I should like,” replied Munro eagerly, and with a flush of joy upon his cheek.

“I am truly happy to hear you say so,” returned his Lordship, “since I have one at my disposal, which, from this moment, I consider yours.”

“My Lord, I cannot, cannot,” said Munro falteringly, and with his hand spread upon his labouring breast, “speak the sense I have of your kindness.”

“ Well, well,” returned the Peer, with a still more expressive smile than he had before given him, “ that it may not be oppressive, I’ll point out a way by which you may make me some requital for it—you see, Mr. Munro, I am what is called a plain spoken man, but I love to come to the point at once, since I think there cannot be a greater proof of folly than to waste minutes, “ the fleeting minutes of too short a life,” as the poet justly and emphatically styles them, which might be usefully employed, in unnecessary punctilios. If a man can render me a service, I like at once to ask him—will he? if I can do him one, I should think myself undeserving of any gratitude for it, if I did not directly tell him so. The service you can render me is by repairing immediately to Ireland, in the northern part of which kingdom I have a very considerable property, and endeavouring to conciliate the confidence of my dependants and tenants, and induce them to acquiesce quietly in the measures

measures now pursuing by government for raising a militia there, and to which, either through ignorance, obstinacy, or the machinations of evil-minded persons, perhaps all together, they, like the majority of the common people, are averse, and trying to resist; should they continue to do so, some blame will probably attach to me, as, from the influence my property gives me in the county, and my being appointed to the command of the regiment there raising, and in which I now beg you to understand your adjutancy is, it will, perhaps, be supposed that if I exerted myself properly, the reverse would be the case. To let government imagine I was not anxious to forward their views, would be to do myself a serious, in all probability an irreparable injury; yet, notwithstanding my thorough conviction of this, I am, at this period, so situated, that, without putting myself to the greatest inconvenience, I cannot go to Ireland; in consequence, I have, for some time past, been looking out

for some friend, to whom I might safely entrust my interests in that quarter; but, till now (don't imagine I flatter), did not meet with one to whom I thought I could: my wish is, that you should repair directly to Ireland, take possession of the mansion-house at Temora, and use every means in your power to gain, as I have already said, the good will of my people there, which obtained, all the rest will follow of course; for once obtain the regard and confidence of an Irishman, and you may almost persuade him to what you please. Will it be inconvenient to you to set off to-morrow?"

Munro hesitated to reply; there was, 'tis true, but one obstacle to his immediate departure, but that was insurmountable, being nothing less than a want of cash, that grand mover, now-a-days, both of animate and inanimate bodies—a want so painful to the feelings of a man of delicacy to disclose, that poor Munro knew not how to confess it. From being compelled to  
do

do so he was saved by the quick-sighted Peer, who, with one half glance of his hawking eye, perceived his embarrassment, and instantly conjecturing the cause—“Come, come, my dear Mr. Munro,” said he, laying his hand, as he spoke, upon the arm of his again greatly agitated companion, and regarding him with the most smiling and complacent countenance possible, “we must no longer consider ourselves as strangers to each other—I have already mentioned my being a blunt man; the truth therefore is, you at present require a little pecuniary assistance.”

“I cannot contradict your Lordship, but a few days will, I trust, suffice for the purpose of enabling me to raise a sufficient sum on my farm, to——”

“Tut, tut!” interposed his Lordship impatiently, “I beg your pardon Mr. Munro for interrupting you, but, before you could mortgage an acre in such an out-of-the-way place as this, why the Irish militia might not only, I am persuaded, be em-

bodied, but disembodied and embodied again; no, no, dispatch is the soul of business; you must, therefore, permit me to be your banker on this occasion—will five hundred pounds answer your present exigencies? speak candidly I entreat.”

“O more; more than answer, my Lord,” replied Munro eagerly.

“Nay, excuse me for thinking differently; in the first place, you must immediately provide for your son’s prolonged stay at college; in the next, all that is requisite to prevent those you leave at home suffering any inconvenience during your absence; for, doubtless,” continued his Lordship, with encreasing earnestness, “you have no idea of removing your family, till comfortably settled with the regiment; to do so before, indeed, would be highly improper; and, thirdly, though your journey to Ireland will not, or rather, I mean, need not, be a very expensive one, you will find a residence there just at this time rather so, as, to facilitate the accomplishment  
of

of the business you are going on, it will be necessary for you to entertain a good deal."

"But such a loan, without any security, without specifying any time for the repayment of it," said Munro anxiously.

"Well, well, since so scrupulous, so over-delicate," replied Lord O'Sinister, still smiling, "you shall do both—yes, as Shylock says, you shall sign me a bond, in a merry mood, but not for a pound of flesh."

"But when, when, my Lord?" eagerly demanded Munro.

"Why now, or to-morrow, or when you return from Ireland, or—whenever you please; my steward here has always bonds and stamps of every description lying by him," answered the Peer, with seeming carelessness.

"Now, now then, my Lord, if you please," cried Munro, who felt that he should breathe more freely that the obligations his Lordship had conferred on him would sit lighter on his heart when he had given an acknowledgment for the sum in question;

question; "pray let him be instructed to prepare a bond for my signature."

"Well, since you are so very urgent—but really, Mr. Munro, this between friends," pulling a bell, however, as he spoke, "is quite unnecessary."

On his summons being obeyed, he ordered the steward to be sent in: accordingly in a few minutes he made his appearance, and, having received the necessary instructions respecting the bond, returned with it by the time coffee was over, and, together with an inkstand, laid it before Munro for his signature.

Munro was stretching out his hand for a pen, when the steward suddenly exclaimed—"But, my Lord, you know two persons are required to witness the execution of a bond."

"What a precise blockhead!" returned his Lordship, but without taking his eyes off of a fine spaniel with which he was playing; "have I not told you that that bond is a mere matter of form?"

"By

"By no means, my Lord; I neither can myself, nor wish any other person to look upon it as such," cried Munro. "I therefore request another witness may be called."

"Well, well, you shall be gratified," said his Lordship, again applying his hand to the bell.

"You write, John, I suppose?" to the servant who answered it.

"No, my Lord, no," replied John, with evident reluctance, and an air of confusion.

"But, I presume, some of the other servants do," said his Lordship.

"I don't know, indeed, my Lord, but I'll ask as soon as they come in."

"In! why where are they?"

"Gone to a wedding in the neighbourhood, my Lord."

"A wedding! oh then, I must excuse them."

"Especially, my Lord," observed the steward, "as this business need not be delayed on their account, as there is a young man now with me, who will

answer for a witness, if your Lordship has no objection to admit him."

"Oh, none in the world, since Mr. Munro will have all the legal forms gone through." *+ 100e*

The steward accordingly withdrew for his visitor, with whom presently returning, the bond was legally executed; and delivered to Lord O'Sinister.

"Upon my honour (with a laugh) this is a good thing," cried he, as he folded up the paper; "here I have got your bond, for a sum you have not received;" he rose as he spoke, and, going to an escritoire in a corner of the room, drew out a drawer. "I don't think, Mr. Munro," pausing here, his back rather turned towards him—"that you looked over this bond?" putting it up, however, at the same moment.

"No, my Lord, I did not think it necessary to do so."

"No, certainly not, Jenkins is excessively exact in all matters of this nature; I have glanced over it, and find he has strictly adhered to his instructions, rendering it payable

payable in the course of five years, by instalments of a hundred a-year, of which said instalments (in a goodnatured tone) you and I will speak hereafter. In the mean while I must tell you, that I shall expect you'll keep a regular account of your disbursements at Temora, that I may settle with you concerning them, as whatever you expend there I shall consider laid out on my account." Then locking up the escritoire, and returning to the table, "I believe," laying some bank-notes before him, "you'll find these right."

"Perfectly, perfectly, my Lord," in an agitated tone replied Munro, as he crushed them in his hand, and put them into his waistcoat pocket.

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### CHAP. III.

“How abandoned is that heart which bulges the tear of innocence, and is the cause, the fatal cause, of overwhelming the spotless soul, and plunging the yet untainted mind into a sea of sorrow and repentance. Though born to protect the fair, does not man act the part of a demon—first alluring by his temptations, and then triumphing in his victory: when villainy gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch till it has thoroughly polluted him.”

STERNE'S LETTERS.

LORD O'Sinister resumed his seat and the conversation, which the entrance of the steward had interrupted: this principally treated of the neighbourhood and beauties of Temora, which his Lordship represented as a very fine seat, and contiguous to the sea; so that Munro, on landing at Donaghadee,

dee, would have but a short journey to it. After a short interval of silence, he suddenly enquired whether Munro had many children? On receiving his reply—"Aye, true, true," said he, "I now recollect Farmer Stubbs told me you had but a son and daughter—Is the young lady younger than her brother?"

Munro bowed.

"And a fine girl, I make no doubt; well, I hope, Mr. Munro, you won't dislike the idea of having an Irishman for a son-in-law; for I think it very probable you will, as the Irish are, I assure you, quite as capable of forming disinterested, as fervent attachments."

"I know they are, my Lord; and, as none can admire the warmth of soul and generosity that characterises them more than I do, so, of course, I should be happy at a connexion with them: the worth of the man who may wish to blend his fate with my daughter's, and not his country, is what I shall look to."

The

The Peer testified the warmest approbation of his sentiments, and then proceeded to express the regret he felt at the little probability there was of his being able, at this period, owing to illness, and the affairs which had brought him into Scotland, to pay his compliments to Mrs. Munro and her fair daughter—"Should I not, however," he continued, "'tis some consolation to think, that next summer I may hope for the honour of an introduction to them, as I then purpose bringing Lady O'Sinister, and Miss Athelstone, my daughter, here, and so on to Ireland; in the meanwhile you'll oblige me much by presenting my compliments to them, and informing them it is my earnest request that they would make the same use of the gardens here as if they were their own."

Munro made a suitable reply to this obliging speech; and soon after, concluding his Lordship must, from the present state of his health, wish to retire early to repose, arose to take leave, but was compelled

pelled to resume his seat, nor suffered to depart till he had partaken of a collation with the Peer. He then quitted him, with a heart overflowing with gratitude—a gratitude too great for words, but which caused him, as they parted, silently to pray that the dews of heaven might fall thick in blessings on him.

He had scarcely passed the outer gate, when he felt his arm suddenly seized behind. He turned round with quickness, and though the light was but faint, discerned the honest countenance of Farmer Stubbs.

“Captain, I beg pardon for stopping you,” he cried, “but—but—” and his heart seemed so full he could scarcely speak—“I find,” pointing with his thumb over his shoulder towards Firgrove, “you have been up at the great house with the great man.”

“With the good man,” said Munro emphatically, and laying his hand upon his shoulder. “Farmer,” added he, his heart  
dilated

dilated with unexpected happiness, and warmed by the generous juice of the grape, "give me thy hand."

"Dang it, that I will, with a heart and a half," answered honest Stubbs, directly striking his hand into the extended one of Munro.

Munro pressed it between his—"Farmer," said he, "may'st thou never stand so much in need of a friend as I did; but should'st thou—" he paused for an instant, and elevated his fine eyes towards heaven, "may'st thou obtain just such a one as thou hast been the means of procuring me."

"Amen, amen!" ejaculated Stubbs sobbingly; "and so my Lord O'Sinister—well, well, he shall, from this time forth, be my white-headed boy—but, Captain, don't—don't ye, I pray, go for to say as how you are so much obligated to me; it was myself I was obliging when trying to oblige you, for I did feel so lumpish when I thought of your being forced to bring home

home that fine youth, Mr. Osmond, before—but, but we won't look back to old grievances—ads dads, Captain, if joy made one as light here,” pointing to his forehead, “as it does here,” pointing to his heart, “some folks just now might well be mistaken for crazy.”

He then, owing, Munro could not avoid thinking, to an intuitive delicacy not always to be found in persons of a higher description, ran off, without asking a question as to what Lord O'Sinister had done.

Munro found his wife and daughter sitting up for him. The joyful tidings he had to reveal were soon made known, and their joy was unspeakable.

“Oh what a worthy, what a charming man must Lord O'Sinister be!” cried the gentle, yet warm-hearted Elizabeth; “what a noble use does he make of his riches, and the power Providence has invested him with of doing good!—if all great men were like him, there would not be so much misery in the world as there is.”

“Certainly

“Certainly not,” returned her father.

“Yet,” said Mrs. Munro, in visible emotion, and smiling tenderly on her husband, “the happiness he has conferred, in the present instance, is like human happiness in general, not without alloy.”

“Alloy, my love!” repeated Munro eagerly, grasping her hand, and looking earnestly in her still beautiful, still interesting countenance; for, like the rose, in losing her bloom, Mrs. Munro did not lose all her attractions.

“Yes; for does not what he has done for you oblige you to leave us?”

“But, my love, for so short a time only.”

“Aye, but then you have the sea also to cross.”

“The sea!” repeated Munro with a laugh, “a brook, my love, you mean; why the passage between Port Patrick and Donaghadee is so short, that if the breeze be at all favourable, you may, with ease, in the course of one day, breakfast at one, dine

dine at the other, and be back time enough to sup at the first."

"Well, I'm glad to hear this," said Mrs. Munro, hastily wiping away a tear which had gathered in her eye—"my fears have made me betray what a bad geographist I am."

Though Munro had never been more inclined to social chat, to domestic converse, than at this moment, he had too little time to make the necessary preparations for his departure, which was fixed for the ensuing morning, to remain long inactive.

He wrote a circumstantial account of all that had lately occurred to his son, congratulated him on the smiling prospects that were now opening to his view, and enclosed him a handsome remittance.

At an early hour the next day he commenced his journey. He drove from his own house, followed, till he was completely out of sight, by the fond and tearful looks of his wife and daughter, to Firgrove, for the

purpose of receiving from the Peer some introductory letters to a few of the principal families in the neighbourhood of Temora.

Unsuspecting of deceit, unforeboding of evil, he began and continued his journey—a journey which, though alone, his agreeable reflections, and the beautiful and romantic scenery it gave him an opportunity of beholding, in which the richness of summer was just at this period beginning to be blended with the verdure of spring, prevented his thinking tedious. Many of the scenes he beheld in the course of it were familiar to his view, but they were such as required not novelty to render them charming; and, from the interesting remembrances they awakened in his mind, were probably contemplated with greater pleasure by him than others he had previously been unacquainted with.

Within a few miles of Port Patrick the heavens suddenly lowered, and a dreadful storm of thunder, lightning, and rain ensued.

sued. Munro had soon selfish motives for regretting this change in the weather, being compelled to expose himself to its fury, in consequence of the failure of one of the wheels of the chaise. By the time he reached Port Patrick, he was completely wet through. He eagerly entered the first inn he came to, but had scarcely done so, when, to his great chagrin, he was informed, that, owing to a number of passengers having just landed from one of the packets, the house was so full, a temporary shelter was all he could obtain in it, and not even that, except in a room already crowded.

Accordingly he enquired for another inn, and was directed to one of a very humble description, close to the sea. On entering this, he found himself in a room, which, from the manner it was fitted up, answered, he saw, the various purposes of hall, parlour, and kitchen: contiguous to the fire some rough-looking men, habited as sailors, sat drinking; and, at a little dis-

tance from them, an elderly woman, whose immediate approach to him evinced her being mistress of the mansion, was busied in unpacking a basket of fish on a table.

Munro, after informing her of the accident he had met with, begged to know whether she could accommodate him for the night? On being answered in the affirmative, he desired to have a room to himself; and was accordingly conducted up a few stairs to one, which instantly brought to his recollection the parlour splendors of that belonging to the inn described in the Deserted Village—like that, its wall was white-washed, its floor nicely sanded, its hearth with aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay, its chimney-piece ornamented with broken tea-cups wisely kept for shew, and its furniture consisting of a

“ Varnish’d clock that tick’d behind the door,  
A chest, contriv’d a double debt to pay,  
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day.”

Munro stood too much in need of a fire to have any hesitation in requesting that the  
ornaments

ornaments of the hearth might be displaced for one. He was immediately obeyed: soon after which, not having dined, he sat down to a dish of the fish he had seen his hostess unpacking, and one of potatoes, with which frugal fare, at least so an alderman would probably have called it, he was quite as well satisfied as if a feast that might have vied with a city one had been spread before him.

Dinner over, and left entirely to his own reflections, his spirits, for the first time since his departure from home, began to flag; the melancholy howling of the wind round the house, the still more melancholy and monotonous noise of the waves breaking on the rocky shore beneath, the heavy and threatening clouds that scudded before the gale, and rapidly succeeding each other, kept the horizon still dark and gloomy, gradually affected him.

At length, as a means of dispelling the melancholy that had thus crept upon him, he was induced to tinkle the little bell that

hung over his head, in order to enquire whether the landlord, of whom, while attending at dinner, the landlady had spoken, was yet come home, that, if so, he might have his company over a bowl of punch.

The landlady answered his summons, and, replying to his interrogatory relative to her husband in the affirmative, was desired to send him up; accordingly, in a few minutes a tall thin elderly man, in the dress of an invalid, with a wooden leg, and a small cocked hat on, made his appearance, and, literally marching up to the table at which Munro was seated, suddenly stopped before him, and, having saluted him by putting his hand to his hat, desired orders.

“That you should sit down,” returned Munro, laughing at the appearance of originality he betrayed, “and partake of this bowl of punch, which I assure you does credit to your wife.”

“Sir, you are my commanding officer at present,” the other replied, with a flourish  
of

of his hand, "and shall therefore be obeyed." Then taking off his hat he hung it on a peg, and took a chair at the table. "Yes, yes," he continued, alluding to what Munro had just said of his wife, "like the rest of her sex, she knows how to mingle contradictions; for punch, Sir, one may say, is made of contradictions, seeing as how the ingredients of which it is composed are all of a contrary nature."

"True," cried Munro, "and it therefore proves, that, by skilful management, things opposite and contradictory in themselves may yet be so blended as to be rendered agreeable."

There are certain signs by which soldiers and freemasons discover one another, be their habiliments what they may; the host, therefore, had not been many minutes in company with Munro ere he was persuaded he was conversing with a military man; to put the matter, however, out of doubt, he enquired, and seemed highly pleased to find he was not mistaken, never feeling so

happy, he said, as when in the society of a person, who, like himself, had been of the honourable profession of arms—the result of this discovery was a long account of the service he had seen, and which, if he was to be believed, had been of the most perilous nature, for still his stories ran

“ Of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe.”

To all of which Munro lent quite as patient, though not, perhaps, quite as delighted an ear, as Desdemona did to Othello's relation of the same: that this was not the case, however, he gave no indication; he knew human nature, and, consequently, that nothing more galled a man than inattention to a narrative of which he has made himself the hero: but, though he neither interrupted, nor discouraged his host from proceeding, he scrupled not to avail himself of a pause in his conversation -  
to

to try and give a turn to it, by enquiring how he liked his neighbours on the opposite side of the water?

“Like them!” repeated the other; “by St. Patrick, their own dear saint, I like them much, for they spend their money like princes, and, as the old song says, on friend or on foe never turn their backs——”

“Are they beginning to be better reconciled than they were to the new military establishment forming amongst them?”

“I cannot say; but if not already, in time I dare say they will, that is, if properly managed, by which I mean, if mild measures are pursued with them; for, like the man in the fable, about whom there was a wager between the sun and the wind, blustering measures will never do with them; convince their reason, give in a little to their humour, and you may, I am certain, do almost any thing with them.”

“Knowing this, and how ungenerous in any one to attempt having recourse to harsh ones.”

“Yes, and as impolitic as ungenerous; since, like the willow, they will readily bend if they conceive themselves well treated, but, like the sturdy oak, sooner suffer themselves to be torn by the violence of the storm from their native soil, than yield to it if they imagine otherwise.”

“You speak well, landlord,” observed Munro; “from your language I conjecture the study of arms has not been your only one.”

“Why no, master, no; I had good parents, who gave me good learning, and once I was quite a bookworm; but just as they were on the point of binding me to a good trade, I took it into my head to be a soldier, in spite of all they could say or do to prevent me, for I was their only child, and they thought much—a great deal perhaps too much of me—my poor mother in particular; but I paid for my, I can’t help calling it, disobedience to her wishes, for had I staid at home quietly, as  
she

she wanted me, I probably," glancing at his wooden leg, "should have had no occasion for this; however, if I had no other cause of sorrow for not having done so, why I should think nothing of the matter; but, at times, when I think that perhaps my going to the wars shortened her days, why then," laying his hand on his breast, "I have such twitches here, that——" but suddenly brightening up—"there is no use, Captain, in ripping up old sores—if we do wrong, why all we can do is to repent as fast as we can, and so the matter is settled."

He paused, but a deep sigh was all that Munro at the moment had the power of uttering, owing to his just then feeling something similar to the twitches he complained of.

"And so, Captain," after a short interval of silence, resumed the landlord, "you are now going, for the first time, amongst my opposite neighbours?"

Munro nodded.

“ Well, if ever we should chance to stumble upon one another again, I dare say I shall have the pleasure of hearing you say you like them much.”

“ I make no doubt you will—but do you ever pay them a visit?”

“ O yes, master, often; sometimes on one account, sometimes on another—I am glad enough, whenever I have occasion to do so, they are such jolly souls, than which there is nothing I like more, although I am not quite as young as I was twenty years ago; and, moreover,” laughing heartily as he spoke, and laying hold of his wooden leg, “ have, with truth it may be said, one leg already in the grave.”

Munro assured him if he came into the neighbourhood of Temora, he should be happy to see him; and, after eating a crust of bread, and drinking again to the health of one another in a tankard of ale, they separated for the night.

The heavens the ensuing morning wore a very different aspect to what they had done  
the

the preceding night; the sun shone forth with all his summer brightness, the glittering waves seemed thronging and rolling from afar to behold his awful beauty, the clearness of the atmosphere permitted the wavy outline of the green hills of Erin to be distinctly seen, and the shore resounded with the noise of passengers and mariners, whilst the packet in which Munro was to embark appeared to be dancing on the trembling waters, as if impatient to pursue its destined course—emblem of youth! still eager, still anxious to rush forward into life, reckless of storms, unapprehensive of danger!

“Oh, life!” cried Munro to himself, as he stood upon the deck of the receding vessel, his eyes still turned towards the shore, where fancy at the moment had conjured up the images of his wife and daughter, pursuing, with looks of love and wishes for his quick return, his trackless course through the waters of the deep—

“Oh,

“ Oh, life,” as he compared his present prospects with his late ones, as he reflected on the sudden manner in which they had been changed, “ how chequered is thy path, how rapid thy vicissitudes! to-day we sink beneath the storm, to-morrow we bask in the sunshine—this hour beholds us chilled with apprehension, the next warmed and enlivened by hope and confidence—what an argument against despair! what an equally powerful one against presumption!—for, as the drooping flower may in an instant be revived, so may the proudest edifice be levelled to the dust.”

Having now done all that is immediately requisite for Munro, by giving him a smooth sea, a propitious breeze, and agreeable company in the packet, we shall bid him adieu for the present, and return to Heathwood.

This separation, the first that promised to be of any length which had taken place between Munro and his wife since their marriage,

riage, was most acutely felt by the latter; the regret, and consequent dejection, however, it occasioned her, would probably soon have worn away, but that she relished not the situation into which he was entering, since one, from what she had heard of it, likely, she conceived, to engross those hours hitherto devoted to domestic happiness. On the subject of her dislike to it, however, she touched not to him; tenderness for his feelings, as well as a conviction of the uselessness of the measure, since he had no other alternative, withheld her from giving utterance to it; but in the hour of emotion and melancholy which succeeded his departure, she involuntarily mentioned it to her daughter.

Elizabeth immediately exerted herself to inspire her with more pleasing hopes of the future, and had, at length, the satisfaction of perceiving, that if she had not absolutely succeeded in doing this, she had at least in rendering her more cheerful.

The evening after the departure of Munro,

as

as they were seated at tea near an open window, commanding an extensive view of the distant country, then glowing with the blush of evening, and round which a beautiful honeysuckle flaunted, diffusing fragrance through the room, they were somewhat surprised at beholding a gentleman, rather advanced in life, but of a strikingly dignified and fashionable air, approaching them through one of the winding walks in the shrubbery, and who, on reaching the window at which they sat, took off his hat, and, respectfully bowing, entreated, in a voice pleasingly modulated, their pardon for the liberty he had taken in entering their garden to enquire his way to E——, a small romantically situated village a few miles from Heathwood.

Mrs. Munro politely assured him an apology on the subject was unnecessary; and Elizabeth, who knew all the beaten tracks about the neighbourhood much better than she did, immediately gave him the required direction. He received it  
with

with gratitude, but also with a look so expressive of weariness, that Mrs. Munro, who was goodnature itself, invited him to enter and take a chair. With evident pleasure, and many thanks, he accepted this invitation. Elizabeth presented him with a cup of tea, and a general conversation soon took place, in the course of which, the stranger displayed much knowledge of the world and a highly cultivated mind, and spoke of himself as being lately returned from the continent, totally unacquainted in the neighbourhood, and now on a pleasurable tour through the kingdom—"Whenever, therefore," said he, "I come to any very agreeable place, such, for instance, as E——, I make it a point to stop there for a few days; and, in order to let nothing escape my observation, since, if I cannot lay claim (and he smiled) to the title of a sentimental, I can at least to that of an inquisitive traveller, make my excursions about on foot, though frequently involved in awkward predicaments from  
doing

doing so, such as often oblige me to put goodnature and politeness to the test, as you, ladies," again bowing and smiling, "have had a recent proof."

Elizabeth, anxious for information, was minute in her enquiries relative to his travels on the continent. With the most obliging readiness he answered these, again, evidently to afford her gratification, going over the principal part of the classic ground of Italy, lingering amidst the enchanting beauties of Tivoli, prying into the craters of Mount Vesuvia, re-examining the magnificent mementoes of Rome's former greatness, and touching on the emotions awakened in his mind on his first entering that celebrated city, once so justly termed the mistress of the world—that theatre, where, as an elegant writer observes, human nature has been all that it ever can be, has performed every thing that it ever can perform, has displayed all the virtues, exhibited all the vices, brought forth the sublimest heroes and the most execrable monsters, has  
been

been elevated to a Brutus, degraded to a Nero, and re-ascended to a Marcus Aurelius. On the wonders of Etna he also dwelt, its vast extent, its boundless prospects, its ice impervious to fire, its fire unextinguishable by ice, its eruptive mountains shaded with stately forests, the mountains caused by these eruptions, the fields of lava, taking ages to cool, the traces of the dreadful depredations committed by it, when raging, boiling with terrific fury, it has poured into the very bosom of the sea, driving far back the proud waves, as if to usurp their place.—“Scenes of this nature,” he continued, “from the mingled horror and magnificence which they present to the view, the astonishment, the sublime and affecting emotions they excite, are infinitely more successful in impressing the mind with reverence for, and devotion to, the Creator, than any the most elaborate treatises that were ever published for the purpose.”

“Assuredly,” assented Mrs. Munro, “since  
’tis

'tis through the medium of the senses the feelings are affected."

In short, the stranger so amused his fair auditors, that, on his rising to take leave, which was not till twilight grey had in its sober livery all things clad, neither were sorry to hear him ask permission to wait upon them again, for the purpose, he said, of repeating the acknowledgments their goodness to him had entitled them to.

Scarcely had he retired, ere a letter was delivered to Mrs. Munro from Lord O'Sinister, acquainting her of his Lordship's being on the point of setting off for London, owing to an unexpected, as also, since it prevented his having yet awhile the pleasure of introducing himself to her and her amiable daughter, "unwelcome summons thither, on business of such importance, as compelled him to leave unfinished that which had brought him into Scotland; and entreating her, as he had previously done through the medium of her husband, to make the same use of the library and gardens.

dens of Firgrove as if they were her own.

This polite letter failed not to heighten the gratitude and esteem with which his Lordship had already impressed the susceptible minds of the mother and daughter, and both united in regretting not having an earlier opportunity than they now looked for of expressing the same in person to him.

The ensuing evening brought their new acquaintance, Mr. Eaton, for so he styled himself, again to Heathwood, and again he gave life and variety to the passing hours by his animated conversation. He now hinted a probability of his remaining some time longer in their neighbourhood, and entreated, should this be the case, permission from time to time to pay his respects to them; this Mrs. Munro had no hesitation in granting, his manners and appearance being altogether such as to preclude an idea to his prejudice; he seemed to be amiable, and Mrs. Munro was too great a

novice in the ways of the world, too pure, too innocent herself, to doubt his being other than he appeared.

Accordingly, from this period, not a day passed in which he did not make his appearance at Heathwood; and each visit rendered the succeeding one still more welcome, so pleasing were his manners, so lively, so intelligent his conversation. At the expiration of a fortnight, as he was sitting alone one morning with Mrs. Munro, Elizabeth being engaged in writing to her father, she, for the first time, noticed an appearance of thoughtfulness in his looks and manner—she smiled—“Our retired neighbourhood is beginning to lose its charms in your eyes, I fancy, Mr. Eaton,” said she.

“On the contrary,” replied he, with quickness, “every day renders me still more attached to it; but it would be strange indeed if this were not the case, since never have any of my hours passed so delightfully as those spent here—ah, my dear  
Madam,

Madam, not to weariness, but anxiety, is owing the depression you have just remarked! I dread the disappointment of the wishes which the contemplation of loveliness and virtue has inspired me with. Oh, Madam!" quitting his seat with an agitated air, and drawing nearer to Mrs. Munro, "need I explain the nature of these wishes? need I say they point to your lovely daughter?"

"My daughter!" repeated Mrs. Munro involuntarily, and with an expression of the greatest surprise on her countenance, as an idea of his having conceived, or being likely to conceive, a passion for her, had never, owing to the disparity of their ages, entered her head.

"Yes, your angelic, your fascinating daughter! she has given birth to a passion to which language cannot do justice—a passion which, should she reject my suit, must entail misery on me, since to conquer it is not, I am thoroughly persuaded, in my power."

"Are

“Are you aware, Sir,” asked Mrs. Munro, “that my daughter has no fortune, neither any prospect of one?”

“I never bestowed a thought on the subject, my dear Madam, for fortune is no object to me, my own being more than adequate to all my wants; should I be so blest as to obtain your daughter, I shall, in obtaining her, acquire all I sigh for, the possession of consummate loveliness, a companion rich in all those intellectual endowments calculated to render her a delightful one, such as could not fail of giving her charms in the eyes of taste and refinement, even though her personal ones were infinitely inferior to what they are.”

“You honour her, Sir, by your favourable sentiments.”

“O Madam, I honour myself by entertaining such, since the homage we pay to worth and beauty reflects lustre on ourselves, by the evidence it affords of our taste and judgment; but (in accents  
apparently

apparently tremulous through emotion) do you, Madam, permit me to hope?"

"It rests not with me to do so, Sir," answered Mrs. Munro; "I shall certainly acquaint my daughter with your proposal, but more I cannot promise."

"What, not your influence with her in my behalf?"

"No, Sir, since, should that influence be requisite, she must be averse to the match; and no parent, in my opinion, has a right to urge a child to a union contrary to their inclination, though certainly one to prevent their forming a connection they conceive imprudent."

"But young ladies, that is, such very young ladies as your daughter," rejoined Mr. Eaton, with rather a disappointed look, "are sometimes so apt to be romantic, that the interference of friends is often essential to their well-doing."

"Perhaps so; but (smiling) I flatter myself my daughter has profited too much by the precepts of the best of fathers, not

at all times to let her reason have empire over her."

"Well, Madam, I will not importune you to any measure you are averse to, neither at present longer intrude on you, aware as I am of my agitation being too great to allow of my being any thing like an agreeable companion. This evening, with your permission, I will return hither to learn Miss Munro's decision respecting me—return literally to learn whether my future days are to be happy or miserable."

Elizabeth's surprise at the proposal of Mr. Eaton fully equalled that which it had occasioned her mother, since, like her, she had no idea, from the disparity of their ages, of any thing of the kind. On recovering in some degree from this surprise, she requested a day to deliberate on it, a request which her mother readily granted. The result of this deliberation was favourable to the enamoured swain—filial love did for him what he wished; she saw her

mother pining over the idea of quitting Heathwood, from her dislike to the bustle and unsettledness of a military life, as inimical in her opinion to the enjoyment of that domestic tranquillity she delighted in; her father too, she made no doubt, from her knowledge of his disposition, would have been better pleased to have obtained a situation less likely than his present one to interfere with the habits he had contracted from retirement. For the purpose, therefore, of procuring him this, and thus removing from the mind of her mother the uneasiness that preyed on it, she decided on accepting the addresses of Mr. Eaton; the fortune she was led to suppose him master of, and the liberality of sentiment and benevolence he appeared possessed of, inducing her to believe that he not only could, but would do all she wished for her family, provided she became his wife.

But that she would ever have consented to this but for the above consideration, admitted not a doubt; not that she disliked

Mr. Eaton—on the contrary, she thought him extremely amiable, and, of course, admired him much—but that she conceived, from the difference of their ages, there could not exist that congeniality of feeling and sentiment between them which she had been taught to believe essential to domestic felicity; at least that refined and exquisite felicity which the heart of sensibility pants for, and which can only be derived from a similarity of taste and feeling. Still, however, though her lot as the wife of Mr. Eaton might not be the happiest, the high opinion she entertained of him permitted her not to fear its being absolutely the reverse; and, even if it were, she was almost inclined to believe she could support it with cheerfulness, if the consequences she looked to from her union with him resulted from it.

Generosity and delicacy of feeling prevented her revealing to her mother her real motives for acceding to his wishes; Mrs. Munro, therefore, felt rather surprised

at

at learning her determination on the subject, the inequality of their ages having inclined her to believe, that, as a suitor, he could not have proved agreeable. This surprise, however, vanished, when she came to reflect on the elegance of his manners and the cultivation of his mind, and that, though beyond the prime of life, he still, to all appearance at least, remained a stranger to any of the infirmities of age; her prepossession in his favour inducing her to believe Elizabeth would have as fair a chance of happiness with him as with any other person, she rejoiced at her decision respecting him being such as she wished, more especially when she considered, that her union with him would exempt her from all future experience of the ills attendant on narrow circumstances, those ills of which she herself had had, alas! such bitter knowledge.

The raptures of Mr. Eaton at the acceptance of his addresses were too great for description, and as the heart of the

timid and shrinking Elizabeth did not by any means participate in them, she would have been better pleased, had they been less violent: they were quickly damped, however, by her mother's positively refusing to let their marriage take place until her father's consent to it had been obtained.

"For, lest you should not be already aware of the circumstance," she added, addressing Mr. Eaton, "I now deem it necessary, Sir, to inform you that my daughter's promise to become your's is but a conditional one—except ratified by her father, it must be considered void."

"Well, my dear Madam," cried Mr. Eaton, with all his wonted animation, and gently seizing her hand as he spoke, "if you are resolved on putting my patience to the test, have the goodness, at least, to let the trial be as short as possible, by writing immediately to Mr. Munro."

Such was her intention, Mrs. Munro assured him. The hopes in which Mr. Eaton was allowed to indulge did not, it may be concluded,

concluded, render him a less constant visitor than usual at Heathwood—he now indeed almost lived there. To Mrs. Munro, in whose good opinion he daily gained ground, his company was always welcome; but Elizabeth would gladly have dispensed with so much of it, as, since she had promised to become his, her mind became frequently oppressed by feelings that made her consider the solitude that afforded her an opportunity of endeavouring to argue herself out of them an indulgence; the involuntary repugnance which she at moments felt to fulfil the promise she had plighted to him, she still tried to conquer, by reflecting on the happy change its realization would, in all probability, cause in the situation of her parents; and that, with a partner at once so enlightened and accomplished as he was, her days could scarcely pass otherwise than agreeably; she did more, she accused herself of caprice for harbouring such a repugnance, since certainly she could not avoid acknowledg-

ing Mr. Eaton had done nothing to lessen the exalted opinion of his merits which had induced her to listen to his proposals.

From her mother she carefully concealed whatever had a tendency to give her uneasiness, and, by the uniform complacency of her manner to Mr. Eaton, evinced an almost equal regard for his tranquillity.

At the expected time a letter was received from her father, in reply to the one acquainting him with the overture of Mr. Eaton; but, instead of sanctioning her acceptance of this, as expected, he positively forbade her (to the utter disappointment of her lover, as both his looks and words testified, as well as to the surprise of Mrs. Munro, her ignorance of the deceptions common amongst mankind occasioning her to wonder at others not placing the same faith and confidence in appearances that she did) from thinking more of Mr. Eaton, except he brought forward the most unquestionable proofs of his being really what he had represented himself—"For, though

though incapable of practising art myself," observed Munro, "I have not lived so long in the world without knowing that there are others not equally so; and though revolting to my feelings to do any thing calculated to wound those of another, still, where the happiness of a child is at stake, such a child too as my Elizabeth, I cannot think of acting otherwise than with the greatest caution. Mr. Eaton must, therefore, relinquish all hope of obtaining her hand, except he proves himself, beyond a doubt, worthy of it."

"I must confess," said Mr. Eaton, who was present at the receipt of this letter, and to whom Mrs. Munro, after glancing over it, candidly communicated the contents, "I must confess," after a moody silence of some minutes, "I did not look for a letter of this kind from Mr. Munro, the mind of candour being seldom the seat of distrust; but, perhaps," and suddenly ceasing to pace the room, which for some minutes he had done, evidently through agi-

tion, "perhaps," turning a look full of scrutiny upon Mrs. Munro, "he may have grounds for suspicion; some invidious person in the neighbourhood may have misrepresented me to him."

"No, I am convinced not," replied Mrs. Munro; "I am certain you have never been mentioned to him by any one but myself; and the terms in which I wrote of you were not calculated," with a smile of sweetness she added, "to excite suspicion."

"Then, since he is so unjust as to harbour it without cause, I trust you will not permit it to have any weight with you: complete your goodness to me, convince me, beyond a doubt, that you really entertain the favourable sentiments for me you wish to make me believe, and thus entitle yourself to my lasting gratitude, by letting me no longer sigh for the treasure I am so anxious to obtain."

"No, Sir," replied Mrs. Munro, in a decided tone, and with a cold and repelling air; "did I think I had a right, which, however,

however, I by no means do, to act in opposition to the wishes of Mr. Munro with regard to his daughter, still would I be withheld from exercising that right, by the conviction I entertain of the superiority of his judgment to mine—what he does I have ever found to be wisest, virtuous, discreetest, best; consequently, worlds should not tempt me to act contrary to his wishes.”

“What a happy man to have them so respected!” cried Mr. Eaton, but with rather a sarcastic smile; then, after another pause of some minutes, during which he again paced the room with agitated steps, and a countenance strongly expressive of anger, vexation, and resentment—“well, Madam, since Mr. Munro must have unquestionable proofs of my being worthy of entering his family, ere he admits me to that honour, may I hope that the testimony of your friend, Lord O’Sinister, in my favour will satisfy him?”

“Assuredly,” returned Mrs. Munro.

“Then I shall write immediately to a relation in London, who is not only intimately acquainted, but connected with his Lordship, and disclose my present situation.”

“And I trust,” rejoined Mrs. Munro, whose gentle nature made her feel hurt at his appearing to be so, “that a little reflection will prevent your remaining offended at Mr. Munro’s conduct on this occasion—be assured none can do greater justice to your merits than he will.”

“When once convinced of them,” added he with quickness, and again a sarcastic smile. “Well, my dear Madam, ere many days elapse, I trust he will be satisfied, that, if I have not qualities to entitle me to his admiration, I have at least to his esteem.”

Though Elizabeth was concerned that any thing had occurred to wound the feelings of Mr. Eaton, still she could not bring herself to feel concerned that something had occurred to delay their nuptials; neither that, from the day her father’s  
letter

letter had arrived, his visits became not only shorter, but less frequent than usual, owing, both she and her mother naturally concluded, to some degree of pique.

As she and her mother were sitting together one day at work, about the time an answer was expected to the letter he had written to his friend in London—"I wonder, mother," said she, suddenly withdrawing her eyes from the window, whence for some minutes she appeared to have been earnestly regarding some object, "who that gentleman is."

"What gentleman, my dear?" asked her mother, raising her eyes from her work—"do you mean the young man we have seen these few days loitering about the heath?"

Elizabeth bowed.

"Oh, probably some one induced by the romantic beauties of the neighbourhood to stop a few days in it."

"It's strange then that he should confine his rambles entirely to the heath."

"Well,

“Well, perhaps he may be on a visit at one of the cottages.”

“No, no, (with vivacity) I cannot believe that; his manners are quite too elegant to permit me to do so.”

“His manners, my dear!” repeated her mother—“why how can you possibly know whether they are elegant or not?”

“By having had a—a few minutes conversation with him,” replied Elizabeth, stammering, blushing, and letting her eyes drop on her work.

“A few minutes conversation with him!” in accents indicative of the greatest surprise—“and pray when had you an opportunity for this?”

“This morning, at the old abbey, to which I walked before breakfast: as I was thoughtfully leaning against one of its broken arches, an approaching step made me suddenly turn round, and I beheld him: making his way through one of the aisles; somewhat startled, I instantly hurried from the spot; he perceived my emotion, and,  
hastening

hastening after me, entreated me, in accents well calculated to dispel it, to excuse the alarm he had given me."

"Well, and then I suppose left you?" said Mrs. Munro, rather anxiously.

"No," returned Elizabeth, but hesitatingly, and blushing a still deeper dye, "he—he—continued to walk on with me, conversing about the different places in the neighbourhood. On coming within sight of home, however, feeling that I should appear awkward if I suffered him to attend me to the door without asking him in, and convinced my doing so would not be pleasing to you, I stopped, and told him I must then bid him good bye, upon which he immediately took leave of me in the most respectful manner."

"You were right," said her mother, "in not suffering him to accompany you home, for, as your father says, young women cannot be too circumspect in their conduct."

"Certainly," assented Elizabeth; "he is one of those characters, however, I think,

think, that would not encroach upon any civility."

"As far as I can judge, from the distant view I have had of him, he appears to be rather handsome," rejoined her mother.

"Rather!" repeated Elizabeth, but evidently involuntarily—"he is excessively handsome; I never saw a more expressive countenance, or finer features—his eyes in particular——"

"Cannot surpass Mr. Eaton's, I am certain," interrupted Mrs. Munro with a laugh, but rather a forced one.

"I beg your pardon, they do indeed; Mr. Eaton's are only indicative of penetration, whereas the stranger's possess not only an equal degree of keenness, but all the brilliancy, the fire of youth, tempered by the most pleasing softness, the——"

"Upon my word, my dear," said her mother a little archly, and looking steadfastly at her, "'tis well he is not here, or he might be rendered vain by what you are saying."

Elizabeth

Elizabeth laughed, or rather affected to laugh, for these words, by making her recollect herself, occasioned her a degree of confusion which nearly overwhelmed her; and was rendered still more painful, by a fear of its exciting unpleasant suspicions in the mind of her mother. To her great relief, the appearance of dinner gave a turn to the conversation.

Mr. Eaton had brought some new publications in the morning, and, soon after the removal of the cloth, the mother and daughter, each taking up a book, seated themselves in different parts of the room. Mrs. Munro soon became completely absorbed by the one she had selected, but the thoughts of Elizabeth wandered, of course she could not fix her attention to the subject she was perusing; she accordingly laid aside the book in a few minutes, and, softly quitting the room, repaired to the garden; here, however, she had not long been, when the probability there was of her being shortly joined by Mr. Eaton, who had said he  
would

would come at an early hour to tea, and with whom she was at present by no means inclined to converse, made her hastily clamber up a steep ascent at the extremity of the garden, and cross over to Firgrove, amidst the embowering shades of which she delighted to ramble.

A double chain of verdant and gently swelling hills extended through the domain, thickly wooded and watered by a number of silvery rills, which, collecting towards the extremity of the chain into one mighty stream, fell headlong over a rocky steep, and, gradually expanding, formed a spacious lake at some distance from the fall, round which the willow of the lover, and the myrtle of the poet clustered, and, with several other ornamental trees and shrubs, united in giving richness to its banks. On the opposite shore luxuriant pastures ascended, bespread with flocks and herds; and beyond these the trees again thickening, formed a seemingly boundless deep immensity of shade, here and there admitting

ting partial views of the Gothic but magnificent mansion, and, farther on, of the ivy-mantled spires of the ruined abbey, whence the boding owl, in strains of melancholy, still hailed the rising moon. On the summit of the cliff, down which the waters precipitated themselves, was situated a rustic temple, consisting of two apartments; the first commanding a view of the lake, and the richly diversified scenery that stretched beyond it; the other opening to the wild heights, that rose beetling in the rear, purple with heath, and in their deep indentures overgrown with hazels, hollies, and a variety of wild shrubs and plants. This rustic building, and the embowered walk over the hills, were favourite haunts of Elizabeth; their romantic beauties were congenial to her taste; and still more pleasing, if possible, to her was their solitude and silence, since allowing her to indulge, without interruption, those waking dreams of future happiness, so delicious  
to

to the youthful heart, because unacquainted with the fallaciousness of hope.

To this building she now bent her steps, but more through the force of habit than any settled intention of entering it; but she did not now, as heretofore, linger in her way, to catch the distant prospects, or inhale the scents of the flowers that perfumed the gale, and tufted the roots of the old trees that shadowed the path.

To the feelings, however, which occasioned this indifference to what was wont to charm her, she did not submit with impunity; she accused herself of weakness, of caprice, of ingratitude, for ever having experienced or yielded to such, for ever having given way to the discontent, the regrets which, for the few last hours, had pervaded her mind—"Yes," she said to herself, "I deserve to be punished for indulging (as she could no longer disguise to herself having done) reflections injurious to the generous man to whom I have  
promised

promised to give my hand, for having suffered myself to draw invidious comparisons between him and a stranger, who may have nothing but personal accomplishments to recommend him: had any force, any influence been exerted to induce me to plight the promise I have given, my present feelings might perhaps in some degree be excusable, but, having voluntarily pledged it, nothing short of the conviction of the worth which led me to do so being but imaginary, could at all justify them. Oh, why is human nature so wayward! why, in the midst of the most smiling prospects, does the sighing heart still remind us of the imperfection of human happiness! but I will stifle the sighs of mine," she continued, "I will fly from the thoughts that gave them birth."

Still, however, she continued to linger in her favourite haunt, though but too conscious its solitude, its silence, rather tended to promote than dispel the feelings  
she

she wished to overcome. The crimson glow of evening began to fade, its shadows deepened, and fainter, and less frequent grew the carol of the birds, but still she attempted not to retire, when suddenly she was roused from her pensive reverie by the sound of feet in the inner apartment, and, starting from the rustic couch on which she had thrown herself, she bent forward, and beheld the stranger advancing from the door opening to the heights.

The surprise, the confusion she betrayed at the moment, were sufficient to induce a belief of his having alarmed her, a belief which his looks and address implied his feeling—"I seem destined," cried he, eagerly approaching her, and with a smile of mingled sweetness and animation, "to alarm you—but for the idea of having been now so unfortunate as to do so, how should I rejoice at this moment."

These words did not tend to lessen the emotion of Elizabeth; she trembled, blushed

blushed still more deeply, said something that was not perfectly intelligible, and moved involuntarily towards the door.

The stranger followed—"Nay," said he, "I shall indeed begin to imagine myself an object calculated to inspire terror, if my appearance still causes you to fly."

"I—I—really, Sir," replied Elizabeth, making a vain effort to speak with composure, "was about quitting this at the instant you appeared."

"Well, Madam," but smiling a little reproachfully, as if doubtful of the truth of this assertion, and presenting his hand to assist her down the steps of the temple, "I will not have the temerity to oppose your departure, however I may regret its being so precipitate."

"Pray do not let me be the means of taking you hence," said Elizabeth, pausing on perceiving him appear as if he meant to accompany her.

"I had no settled intention of remaining here any time, I assure you, and shall, therefore,

fore, conceive myself not only honoured but obliged, by being permitted to attend you hence."

Elizabeth, but with a fluttering heart, signified, by a bow, her compliance with this request, since to have refused it would have been, she conceived, to incur the imputation of distrust or prudery, neither of which she liked the thoughts of being accused of.

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## CHAP. IV.

“ Why he can smile, and murder while he smiles,  
And cry content to that which grieves his heart,  
And wet his cheek with artificial tears,  
And frame his face to all occasions.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE animated remarks of her companion convinced Elizabeth he was a stranger to the agitation and embarrassment she felt at the moment. As they slowly proceeded, the tall trees beneath which they walked gently rustling in the breeze, and from the adjacent shades the droning beetle flitting across their path, he expatiated with rapture on the scenes by which they were surrounded, and the effect, particularly at

such an hour as the present, they were calculated to produce upon the mind, of the tranquillity they communicated to the feelings, and the consequent disposition they excite in the mind to receive tender impressions—"Convinced of this," added he, "I would, had I an inexorable mistress (and he smiled a little archly, and looked more earnestly than he had before done at Elizabeth), endeavour to allure her into such, more especially, as a writer, to whose opinions I subscribe, has declared, 'the lonely mountain, and the silent grove, encrease the susceptibility of the female bosom, inspire the mind with rapturous enthusiasm, and, sooner or later, draw aside and subjugate the heart.'"

He paused; but the reply Elizabeth perceived he expected, she hesitated to make; for, though in her heart she allowed the justness of the observation, she did not like to acknowledge so to him; on his pressing, therefore, for her opinion on the subject, she rather evasively said, that to  
be

be able to form a just one on it, she conceived it requisite to have mixed in others.

“ Pardon me for differing from you,” returned he; “ but surely one may easily conceive that the noise, the agitating pursuits, and dissipation of a metropolis, are inimical to those feelings that soften and dispose the heart to love.”

“ Perhaps so,” Elizabeth was about replying, when, to her inexpressible dismay, she heard the voice of Mr. Eaton. It instantly struck her, that, surprised at her absence, after having announced his intention of paying her an early visit, he had come in quest of her; and that to find her with such a companion could scarcely fail of exciting the most injurious suspicions in his breast concerning her.

Terrified at the idea, she directly hastened from the path she was pursuing, nor paused till she had got to a considerable distance from it; when, in much agitation, she motioned to the stranger, who, with astonish-

ment in his looks, had followed her flying steps, to leave her.

“Good Heavens!” he exclaimed, turning pale, “have I then been so unfortunate as to offend you?—so unfortunate as to inspire disgust and abhorrence where I wished to excite such very different sentiments?”

“No, Sir, no,” said Elizabeth, endeavouring, from her anxiety to dispel the strange ideas she conceived he might form of her conduct, to speak in a collected tone, “but I am now near home, and, therefore——”

“I understand you, Madam,” slightly bowing, and in rather a reproachful tone, he cried, on finding she paused; “you deem me presumptuous, I see—could you look into my heart, you would acquit me of being so.”

“You err in thinking such a thing,” said Elizabeth involuntarily.

“Indeed!” exclaimed he with rapture, and a cheek suffused with its rich glow,  
“then

“then why this impatience to banish me your presence?”

Elizabeth, with encreased confusion, bent her eyes to the ground, and, unable to reply to this question, mechanically moved forward.

The stranger opposed her progress—  
“Nay, be not displeased,” cried he, observing her about speaking with an air of anger, “I mean not to act contrary to your wishes; but, at the same time, cannot prevail on myself to neglect making use of so favourable an opportunity as the present for revealing my own—for avowing the admiration, the passion with which you have inspired me. Yes, enchanting girl,” suddenly seizing her hand, and pressing it to his throbbing heart, while with eyes beaming with love he sought her downcast ones, “you are the magnet that has detained me amongst these shades—I saw you by chance, but, sudden and transient as was the view, your charms made an impression on my heart, which is, I am convinced,

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vinced,

vinced, indelible; nor did I endeavour to subdue it, when, on enquiry, I found you were single, at liberty to (here it may be requisite to mention that neither Mr. Eaton's visits nor overtures to Elizabeth were known in the neighbourhood) receive the addresses of a lover."—Elizabeth started at these words, and, turning deadly pale, with difficulty prevented herself from repeating this last expression. "Had I obeyed the dictates of passion," he continued, in too much emotion at the moment to notice hers, "I should immediately have tried to make my way to your feet, but, unknown as I was to any one who could properly introduce me to you, I feared, by precipitancy, to incur the imputation of temerity, and therefore resisted those dictates. At the moment we met this evening, I was revolving the manner in which I could best introduce myself to you, whether by letter, or by watching for an opportunity of speaking to you—my wishes are, to be allowed to wait on you to-morrow,

row, and to your friends reveal what my pretensions are to your favour—have I your permission,” and he looked anxiously in her face, “to do so?”

Elizabeth could not immediately reply—never had she been so cruelly agitated, never as at this moment, when she saw that all that happiness which she had pictured to herself must be the result of the union of enamoured hearts and congenial minds might have been hers—“And ah, why, why was I so precipitate in engaging myself!” she inwardly and involuntarily exclaimed; “why not allow myself greater time to investigate the nature of my feelings, and thus ascertain the effect likely to be produced on them, by beholding a being according in every respect with the ideas I had formed of perfection?—But how vain, how improper these regrets! the die is cast, my faith is plighted, and both virtue and reason require that I should make every effort to reconcile myself to the fate that awaits me.”

“Your favourable sentiments, Sir,” she at length, but in faltering accents, said, “are flattering, but ill should I deserve such, if I did not candidly inform you—that——”

“Oh, do not doom me to despair!” he passionately interrupted, and again seizing the hand which she had withdrawn, “if so unfortunate as to have failed of exciting any thing like a similar prepossession in my favour, grant me at least opportunities for trying to recommend myself to you.”

“Impossible, impossible,” she was on the point of saying, when again the voice of Mr. Eaton, evidently descending the hill, reached her ear, and closed her lips: wresting her hand from the stranger, she darted forward, but had not got many yards, when, overtaking her, he caught her by the robe and stopped her.

“Will you then, by flying me in this manner, have the cruelty to let me imagine myself

myself an object of abhorrence to you?" he cried.

"If—if you wish I should ever speak to you again," said Elizabeth, confused and struggling to free herself, "do not detain me now; should we meet again, I shall explain why I am so anxious now to go."

"Should we ever meet again!" he repeated; "I shall know no peace till we do, for you have conjured up fears that torture me." Then relinquishing his hold—"I no longer oppose your departure, Madam," he added; "but remember, of all states suspense is the most painful; and be not therefore surprised if I seek for an opportunity of having mine quickly terminated."

Elizabeth, without replying, hurried forward, nor again paused till she found herself at home. Meeting the servant in the hall, she asked concerning Mr. Eaton; and, finding he was not yet come, neither that her mother had made any enquiry about her, she repaired to her chamber, for the

purpose of trying to regain composure, ere she made her appearance in the parlour.

Some time elapsed ere she succeeded in her efforts for this; nor did she quit her chamber till summoned to tea. She found Mr. Eaton in the parlour, and conversing in his usual manner with her mother; and from every circumstance felt convinced that he had not been to Firgrove on her account. Though never less inclined to conversation, or to receive the attentions of Mr. Eaton, she forced herself to join in one, and receive the other, with her usual complacency; so painful, however, were the efforts she was compelled to make for the purpose, that she could not help rejoicing when she saw him take up his hat to retire.

As soon as he was gone, she candidly, although not unhesitatingly, acquainted her mother with her second interview with the stranger, and all that had occurred in the course of it.

The communication occasioned Mrs.  
Munro

Munro not a little surprise, and would have caused her an equal degree of pain, had she at all suspected the feelings with which it was made; this, however, Elizabeth took such care to prevent, that she had not the slightest idea of the stranger having made any impression on her heart. She highly approved her conduct towards him, and expressed a hope of her having shortly an opportunity of informing him of her engagement, should they find, which, however, from the discouraging manner in which his declaration had been received by her, she was rather inclined to think they should not, that he still lingered in the neighbourhood.

Elizabeth's self-reproaches were renewed on retiring to her chamber—"But I will atone for my error," she cried, while tears fell from her, "by henceforth flying from all that has a tendency to make me repeat it—yes, from this instant I will sedulously struggle against every feeling calculated to render me unworthy in my own  
16 eyes,

eyes, or the eyes of those whose esteem I value."

Spite, however, of this resolution, the thoughts of poor Elizabeth would stray beyond the limits she prescribed them, and fancy persisted in suggesting to her the happiness which, but for her hasty engagement to Mr. Eaton, might have been hers. The pangs which this suggestion occasioned were not lessened by any reflection on the possibility there was of the young stranger being other than his appearance proclaimed him; had such a one, however, occurred, it would not, in all probability, have been attended to, so prepossessing were his looks and manners—the former all animation and intelligence, the latter lively and insinuating.

To a figure of commanding height and fine proportion, characterised by an air of dignity and fashion, he united a countenance full of sweetness, sensibility, and candour; his smile proclaimed a heart of benevolence; his dark eyes a proud and  
noble

noble spirit, calculated alike to awe and conciliate; in short, his was

“ A combination, and a form indeed,

Where every god did seem to set his seal,

To give the world assurance of a man.”

Uninclined to rest, Elizabeth seated herself at an open window. In another frame of mind, and the scene without would have communicated the most delicious feelings to her bosom; as it was, she could not gaze upon the starry heavens, or the full-orbed moon rising majestically over the broom-clad heights, and extending its silver beams athwart the landscape, inhale the dewy freshness of the exhaling shrubs and flowers, or listen to the soft sighing of the night-breeze amidst the foliage, without a sensation of pleasure—but pleasure, 'tis true, of a melancholy nature; and rendered still more so by the solemn silence of the hour, the monotonous noise of distant waters, and, at intervals, the hollow bark of the

the

the watchful house-dog, the centinel of the farmer.

From her contemplative attitude Elizabeth was suddenly roused by a thick cloud of smoke rolling past her window, and a strong smell of fire: not a little alarmed, she flew from her chamber towards her mother's, whence the smoke appeared to issue. In vain, however, she strove to enter it, a hot and suffocating smoke filling the adjoining gallery, which, spite of her efforts to advance, forced her to retreat: she shrieked aloud, and was running to the servants apartments, when a violent knocking at the hall door induced her to fly thither—with trembling hands she drew back the bolts, and admitted, not, as she expected, some of the neighbouring rustics, but the young stranger. She involuntarily started at beholding him, but, almost instantly recovering from the emotion his unexpected appearance occasioned, acquainted him with the danger of her mother,

ther,

ther, and conjured him to try and save her. He needed no reiterated entreaty to induce him to do this; guided by her voice, he hastily ascended the stairs, and, rushing through the smoke, quickly reappeared with Mrs. Munro in his arms, enveloped in her night-gown, and in a state of insensibility. Committing her to the care of her daughter, he hurried off to assist the servants (who, roused by the outcries of Elizabeth, were by this time risen) in extinguishing the fire, the red glare of which was now visible through the smoke. In a short time, but principally owing to his exertions, it was got under, without doing any farther injury than consuming a few boards communicating with the flooring of Mrs. Munro's chamber; but from which circumstance it was evident, that if not taken at the moment it was, it would have spread beyond the possibility of being subdued. How it could have originated where it did, was a matter of no less astonishment and conjecture than consternation to the family,

family, it being perfectly well recollected by all, that not a person had been through the gallery that night with a light but Mrs. Munro; and beside, that had it been occasioned by a spark from her candle, it must have burst out long before it did, as there was nothing in the gallery in which it could have lain smothered for any time. The mystery, however, was at length solved, by a recently extinguished brand being discovered by the stranger close to a window near her chamber door, which, owing to the heat of the weather, had for some nights past been left open, and through which it was evident it had been flung.

The conviction imparted by this discovery, of having some secret enemy, agonized Mrs. Munro, who speedily recovered her senses, which the suffocating atmosphere of her chamber had deprived her of, at the moment she was endeavouring, in consequence of being roused by the shrieks of her daughter, to gain the door, beyond description.

“Against

“Against an open foe,” she cried, “one may be guarded, but against an ambushed one ’tis next to impossible.—Gracious Heaven! I sicken with apprehension at the idea of what may yet be attempted by a person capable of devising so diabolical a scheme! How dreadful, the absence of Mr. Munro at such a juncture!”

“Pardon me, my dear Madam,” said the stranger, with much vivacity, “for saying, that, after the striking proof you have just received of being the immediate care of Providence, these fears ought not to be indulged; allow me also to add, that you will confer an obligation on me, by empowering me to make those enquiries relative to this affair, which Mr. Munro would doubtless deem necessary if here.”

This, however, was a request, which, after his avowal to her daughter, propriety forbade her to comply with; but the gratitude she owed him, as the preserver of her life, would not allow her to refuse seeing him the next morning, especially  
as

as it was her determination then to give her daughter an opportunity of informing him how she was situated, should he continue at all particular in his conduct to her.

He received this permission with sparkling eyes, and a glance at Elizabeth, which convinced her he augured favourably from the circumstance; she sighed at the idea, well knowing, that in proportion to the sanguineness of hope is the bitterness of disappointment.

As soon as the agitation of Mrs. Munro had somewhat subsided, she enquired to what was owing his having so fortunately discovered their danger? and, in reply, learnt, entirely to his being tempted to stay out beyond the usual hour by the fineness of the night.

At length he departed, but not without repeating his intention of waiting on them the next day.

Neither mother nor daughter could think of rest any more that night—the danger  
they

they had so narrowly escaped, the horror with which their minds were impressed, by the idea of having a secret enemy, totally precluded sleep; in vain they endeavoured to conjecture who this enemy could be—they could not recollect a being from whom they deserved aught but kindness and goodwill—"Let the consciousness of this, therefore, my dear mother, tranquilize your spirits," said Elizabeth, at length making an effort to conquer her own agitation, for the purpose of endeavouring to calm her mother's; "those who have nothing to reproach themselves with, may surely rely with confidence on the protection of Heaven."

"No doubt," returned her mother; "it would, however, I confess, be a satisfaction to me, to know exactly the quarter in which we have cause for apprehension."

"If you accepted the services of the stranger, I think it probable you shortly would," said Elizabeth, "for he appears to be one of those characters whom neither  
trouble

trouble nor difficulty can deter from persevering in any cause they undertake."

"He does; I shall, however, rest satisfied with those of Mr. Eaton on this occasion, (Mrs. Munro always seemed to make it a point to mention this gentleman whenever the young stranger was spoken of)—Poor man, how greatly will he be affected when he hears the danger we were in!"

"Yes," replied Elizabeth; "but so must every one possessed of humanity."

The next morning, just as they were dressing for breakfast, a letter, directed in an unknown hand, was brought from the post-office to Mrs. Munro. She desired Elizabeth to open it. Accordingly breaking the seal, she read aloud as follows:

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"MADAM,

"The lines that now meet your eye are the dictates of a heart fervent in its devotion to virtue, zealous in the  
cause

cause of innocence; let this assurance, therefore, induce you to pay attention to the warning they convey. One of the most artful, the most unprincipled of men, has found means of introducing himself to your notice—introducing himself for the diabolical purpose of ensnaring the innocence of your daughter: as you value the preservation of that innocence, as you wish to retain the applauding testimony of your own conscience, let not your door again be opened to the traitor—let not his pestilential breath again approach the flower, whose sweetness he would rifle; his licentious eye again gaze upon the cheek, whose virgin blush he would annihilate; his treacherous tongue again pour poison into the ear of purity. That his nefarious schemes may in every other instance, as in this, be disappointed, the domestic happiness he now aims to destroy, continue unimpaired, is the sincere wish of one, who, in avowing himself the friend of innocence and virtue, avows himself

self the friend of Mrs. Munro and her lovely daughter."

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"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Mrs. Munro, eagerly grasping the letter, "who could have imagined such a thing! Who could have thought him such a villain!"

"Who, mother?" tremblingly, and pale as death, asked Elizabeth.

"The stranger—who else could you suppose?"

"Why, I think one cannot be certain that it alludes to him," replied Elizabeth, but in tremulous accents and with downcast eyes—"one may just as well imagine that it alludes to—to——"

"Mr. Eaton, I suppose you would say—oh, my dear girl (in a reproachful tone), how could you admit such an idea?"

"I should be sorry to do injustice to any one," returned Elizabeth; "but, in reality, Mr. Eaton is almost as great a stranger to us as him we style so."

"But

“But his age, his manners, his conversation, above all, the testimonial he has promised to produce from Lord O’Sinister, of being what he has represented himself, convince me he is not the person alluded to in this letter—no, no, ’tis the stranger I am certain; and we need give ourselves no further trouble about the affair of last night, since I have not a doubt of his being the incendiary.”

“And to what motive can you ascribe such wickedness?” asked Elizabeth.

“Entirely to his wishing to obtain an opportunity of doing something which should lead us to believe we owed him an obligation, in consequence of his despairing, from your manner, of otherwise receiving permission to visit here; but he shall find, from this being denied him, that he has no cause to triumph in his villainy—that if not absolutely detected, ’tis at least suspected.”

Elizabeth sighed—she could not deny that circumstances made against him: still, however,

however, the reflection that he might be innocent, and, if so, of the ingratitude he must accuse them of, on finding their door closed against him, without any reason for its being so assigned—the indignation with which, in that case, such conduct must inspire him, made her wish that her mother would not give way entirely to the supposition of his being guilty.

At length, by dint of supplication, she prevailed on her to let her not seeing him be excused by the plea of indisposition. Scarcely had she gained this point, when she saw him approaching the house; in a few minutes after, the servant entered the chamber with a card, on which were written the following lines with a pencil:

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“THE disappointment of Captain Delacour, at not obtaining a personal opportunity of paying his respects to Mrs. and Miss Munro, is not a little aggravated by the cause of it; but, though denied the  
pleasure

pleasure of an immediate interview with them, he trusts he shall not be denied the pleasure of immediately employing himself in their service."

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To this address Mrs. Munro, after a little hesitation, returned the following answer:

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"MRS. and Miss Munro unite in requesting Capt. Delacour to accept their thanks for his politeness, which, however, they must positively decline putting to any further test."

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"Well, if any circumstance occurs to prove him the wretch he is now suspected of being, never," said Elizabeth with solemn earnestness, as she beheld him with an air of disappointment quitting the house, "never, never," her fancy still dwelling

on the noble expression of his countenance, the candour, sweetness, and sensibility of which it was indicative, "will I again place faith in appearances."

Her mother acknowledged, that, to have judged of him from his looks, she should have considered him one of the most amiable of human beings; but, notwithstanding their testimony in his favour, avowed her belief of his being one of the most worthless.

The conversation relative to him was interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Mr. Eaton, who seldom called of a morning. The occurrence of the preceding night Mrs. Munro conceived she could not keep from his knowledge; but with regard to the anonymous letter she resolved to be silent, lest the disclosure of it should be the means of involving him in danger. He hearkened to the particulars she communicated with an agitated air, and a varying countenance; and scarcely suffered her to conclude, ere he made an effort to depart,

depart, for the purpose, he said, of enquiring into the affair. This intention Mrs. Munro strongly opposed, but without saying why; and, at length, prevailed on him to relinquish it. By degrees he became tranquillized; and, as he recovered his tranquillity, grew extremely inquisitive about the young man (so Mrs. Munro styled Captain Delacour) who had been so instrumental to her preservation. His enquiries, however, relative to him remained unanswered; and, but whether owing to this circumstance, or to any other secret cause of uneasiness, he suddenly became gloomy and abstracted, and abruptly departed; not, however, without first signifying his intention of returning in the evening, and expressing a hope of then having the letter, he was now in daily expectation of receiving from his friend in London, to produce.

The mention of this letter, or rather the idea of the event she expected it to lead to, sickened the heart of Elizabeth. Pale,

melancholy, desponding, she continued leaning against a window after the departure of Mr. Eaton, lost to external objects, till the trampling of horses roused her from her reverie; when, raising her eyes, she beheld Captain Delacour riding across the heath, attended by a groom. It instantly occurred to her that he was quitting the neighbourhood, an idea which occasioned her a pang, that excited self-reproaches sufficiently severe to draw a flood of tears from her. To conceal these from observation, aware that if noticed they would lead to enquiries she could not answer, she fled to the garden; but had not been long there, when the sound of a carriage stopping at the house made her hasten back through curiosity; and, to her unutterable astonishment, the first object that met her eyes, on entering the hall, was her father.

We shall enter into no particulars, being totally irrelative to this story, of the manner in which Munro was occupied or situated

situated in Ireland; suffice it to say, that one evening, as he was indulging in a solitary ramble, for the purpose of meditating on the dear connexions at home, and anticipating the happiness they should all experience when again re-united, a gun was discharged at him through a hedge, near which he was walking, and he instantly fell. He felt he was wounded, but where, the universal shock his frame had received prevented him for a moment from ascertaining. He then perceived it was in his leg, and, sitting up, took out his handkerchief to bind round it. While thus employed, a hasty step made him raise his eyes, and he beheld a man, in appearance a ruffian, running towards him with a gun. On perceiving him, he no longer attributed the injury he had met with to accident, as at first he had been inclined to do; and, under the persuasion of his life being threatened, made an effort, but an unsuccessful one, to rise.

Within a few paces of him the ruffian suddenly turned the gun, and with the but

end of it aimed a blow at his head—"O villain!" exclaimed Munro, with a wild and flashing eye, throwing up his hands as he spoke to ward off the impending blow. It must, however, have fallen, his position being too awkward a one to permit his parrying it effectually, but that, at the very moment it was descending, the gun was knocked out of the murderous hands that held it by the blow of a cudgel, and the villain instantly fled.

For a minute Munro lost the power of perception; on regaining it, he beheld an elderly man bending over him, in whose features, at a second glance, he recognised those of his mutilated host of Port-Patrick.

"Good God," he exclaimed, "what does all this mean?"

"It means," replied the other, "that you are the care, as indeed we are led to believe the good ever are, of Providence—your life was attempted by a villain, and I arrived just in time to save it. Your honour may remember, that, as you were stepping

stepping into the boat, I told you, the first time I came to this side, I would make bold to call upon you; I was in my way to do this, when I stumbled upon you here—but come, Captain, let us hasten to the house for assistance; with the aid of my arm, and this stout cudgel, don't you think you can make a shift to walk thither?"

"To hobble, my friend," replied Munro with a faint smile, as with his assistance he rose from the ground.

With difficulty they reached it. They found the hall door open, and Munro, turning into the first room he came to, rang for a servant.

His summons was answered by a man who lived at Temora in capacity of steward, a fellow of surly manners, and most unprepossessing countenance; insomuch, that Munro had conceived a strong prejudice against him, now not a little strengthened by the suspicions, which the terror and confusion he betrayed at seeing him excited, of his having had some hand in

the recent affair; the disclosure of these suspicions prudence, however, now forbade; and, accordingly, till completely out of his power, Munro determined not to give a hint of them.

In pursuance of this resolution, therefore, he contented himself with merely desiring him to fetch a bottle of wine, and then go off in quest of a surgeon. Dermody obeyed, but not without having first made some awkward efforts, such as tended to strengthen Munro's suspicion of his guilt, to appear concerned for what had happened.

The moment he was out of sight—"Well," said the honest veteran, or as we shall in future style him, Macleod, "if ever I saw a villain, the fellow who has just left us is one. Captain, for Heaven's sake don't remain another night in this house or neighbourhood, for my mind misgives me your life is not safe in either—the wherry in which I came over will be on its way back in the course of an hour; so, in the  
name

name of God, return with me, and rely on it, my dame and I will do every thing that is necessary for you."

Munro needed no importunity to induce him to comply with this entreaty, perfectly coinciding with Macleod, in thinking that where he then was he was not safe. He had no sooner decided on departing with him, than, as no time was to be lost in making preparations, he directed him where to find his chamber, in order that he might collect his clothes, and pack them up for him.

Macleod was not long in dispatching this business; he returned with the portmanteau, and was then desired by Munro to unlock an escritoire in an adjoining closet, and bring him out the cash, amounting to two hundred pounds, which he had deposited there: to apply a key to this, however, Macleod found unnecessary, as it lay open, and completely cleared of its contents.

“Well,” said Munro, on learning the robbery, endeavouring to force a smile as he spoke, though distressed beyond expression by the loss of a sum so essential to the comfort of his family, “it can’t be helped, my friend; there is, therefore, no use in complaining about it; those who took it doubtless concluded, that, by this time, I should have had no further occasion for cash.”

“Ah the villains!” cried Macleod, “only for the delay it would occasion, I’d search that ill-looking rascal, Dermody, when he comes back, for I’ll be sworn he’s concerned in this business—but, Captain, have you no fire-arms?”

“Luckily remembered,” returned Munro; “in the hall, my friend, you’ll find a brace of pistols belonging to me, and loaded, that is, if no trick has been played with them.”

Macleod hastened for them, and, being examined, it was found that, unlike the  
escritoire,

escritoire, they still retained their contents. Dermody presently returned, but unaccompanied by the surgeon, saying he could not find him at home.

“Well, it matters not,” said Munro, as, with the assistance of Macleod’s stick, he quitted his seat; “I am going where I hope it will not be so difficult to find one.”

“What, going away from this?” exclaimed Dermody, in an accent of surprise, and with a look at once scrutinizing, apprehensive, and ferocious.

“Yes; it is time for me to leave a place where my property has been taken, and my life attempted.”

“What—how—your property!—Lord, what has made you think so?”

With involuntary severity, and turning, as he spoke, his eyes full upon him—eyes which, like those of his friend Lord O’Sinister, seemed formed to dive into the recesses of the soul—“You will probably soon know,” said Munro.

Dermody tried, but was unable, to support his gaze.

“Come, come,” cried Macleod impatiently, “instead of standing like a fool there, twirling your hat upon your thumb, be so good, Master Dermody, as to throw this here portmanteau over your shoulder, and trot down with it to the beach.”

Dermody turned a look full of rage and scorn upon the old soldier; the refusal, however, which evidently hovered on his lips, was prevented by Munro, in a calm but resolute tone, reiterating the command.

After a little hesitation, he sullenly obeyed, and still more sullenly submitted to going before, after having made several unsuccessful efforts to fall into the rear, awed, in all probability, by the stern looks of Munro, and the threatening manner in which Macleod held the pistols.

In pain, both of body and mind, Munro embarked—he was agonized to think, that, through the machinations of some secret foe, he might perhaps be compelled to  
relinquish

relinquish the advantageous situation he had so recently obtained. By degrees, however, he strove to tranquillize his mind, by endeavouring to hope the best; and, after a little deliberation, finally resolved, notwithstanding Macleod's arguments to the contrary, on remaining silent with regard to the affair that had driven him from Ireland, until he had consulted his noble friend, Lord O'Sinister, respecting it.

The grief, the consternation, and resentment, which this truly good man would feel on being acquainted with it, he pictured to himself in the liveliest colours—"Yes," said he mentally, "he will feel as though the injury had been done to himself, and never rest, I am convinced, till he has made every exertion in his power to discover the perpetrators of it—how then," he continued, after a transient pause, "can I let my spirits flag, knowing, as I do, that I enjoy the patronage of so worthy and so great a man—one who, of his own

accord, sought me out for the purpose of befriending me—Away tormenting fears and forebodings, whilst Lord O'Sinister continues my friend, and continue so I am certain he will, except my own fault, I have no reason to give way to you!"

As soon as he landed a surgeon was summoned, and the ball, which had lodged in his leg, extracted, but not without difficulty and danger, and the unpleasant information, of the wound in all probability requiring a length of time to heal, owing to so long a period having elapsed ere it was attended to, and the painful exertions made after receiving it.

Finding he was likely to remain an invalid for some time, Munro resolved on returning home immediately, notwithstanding Macleod's earnest solicitations for him to remain where he was, and his conviction of experiencing from him every attention he required; but his heart fondly turned towards home, and, even though inclination had not impelled his return, prudence

prudence would, the again contracted state of his finances requiring that he should incur no extraordinary expence.

Accordingly, the day after his arrival at Port-Patrick, he was assisted into a chaise by his worthy host, and, accompanied by his best wishes for his speedy recovery, set out for Heathwood.

Gladly would he have concealed from his wife and daughter the circumstance to which his quick return was owing, being perfectly aware of the horror it was calculated to impress them with; but, as to follow his wishes in this instance was impossible, he endeavoured to prevent the consequences he apprehended from its disclosure, by cautiously breaking it to them; but, notwithstanding this, ere his narrative was closed, his wife became senseless in his arms, and Elizabeth, clinging round his neck, proved, by her fast-falling tears, that it was to these only she was indebted for not being reduced to a similar situation.

The

The attentions of her husband and daughter soon restored Mrs. Munro to animation. On reviving she fondly pressed the former to her heart, and—"Never, never will we part again on this side the grave!" burst from her.

"While we were so safe, so happy," cried Elizabeth—"oh my father!" and, dropping on her knees, she wrapped her arms around him and her mother, and kissed and bathed with her tears their united hands.

The pain of his wound, which the motion of the carriage had not a little aggravated, soon obliged Munro to repair to his chamber. In his way to it, the mischief done by the fire caught his attention, and led to enquiries, which brought about, not only an immediate, but candid disclosure of all that had recently happened.

Distrustful of her own judgment, and, besides, so accustomed to repose unlimited confidence in him, that, even if she had thought, which however she by no means did,

did, that the circumstances she now revealed could have been concealed from his knowledge, she would still have felt uneasy at their being so, Mrs. Munro suffered no interrogatory from him to remain unanswered.

Munro was greatly agitated by what he heard, but by no means concurred in opinion with her respecting Captain Delacour; he was convinced he was the young hero of whose exploits he had lately heard so much, and could not believe it possible that a character like his would plot the destruction of an innocent family—"His revealing his name is, to me, a proof of his innocence," he added; "since, if guilty, 'tis but natural to suppose he would carefully have avoided every circumstance likely to lead to his detection."

"Then if you acquit him, on whom does your suspicion light?" asked Mrs. Munro.

"Not particularly on any one; our lives have been so inoffensive, the little power we possessed of doing good to others has  
ever

ever been so eagerly made use of, that I am quite at a loss to conjecture how or where we have provoked enmity: when a little recovered, I shall certainly endeavour to discover; in the interim, all that can be done, is to be as much upon our guard as possible; and still to remember, that He, without whose permission a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, will continue to watch over the safety of the creatures that look up to him for protection."

"You are of opinion then that the anonymous letter does not allude to Captain Delacour?"

"I am; but (half smiling), pray where is this Mr. Eaton, of whom I have heard so much? when may I expect the honour of being introduced to him?"

"Why, in the course of an hour or two, my love, I make no doubt, as he is a regular attendant at our tea-table; if he knew of your arrival, I dare say his eagerness to pay his respects to you would bring him here sooner than usual." She then entered  
into

into a discussion of his merits, and concluded by a declaration of the happiness she experienced, at the idea of Elizabeth's marriage with a man so every way calculated to render her happy.

A deep and involuntary sigh from the bosom of Elizabeth, at these words, caused her father to turn his eyes with quickness on her; and awakened suspicions in his mind, which determined him to be minute in his enquiries, ere he permitted her marriage to take place with Mr. Eaton, even though that gentleman should prove himself worthy of her hand.

Contrary to the expectations of Mrs. Munro, the tea equipage made its appearance without being preceded by Mr. Eaton; and, to her encreasing surprise, minute after minute, and hour after hour, rolled away without bringing him. Something very particular, she persuaded herself, must have occurred to keep him away, and, in consequence, resolved on sending, at an early hour

hour the next morning, to enquire after him. Elizabeth made no comments on the failure of his usual visit, neither did her father, though he was not without his thoughts on the subject, being determined to give no utterance to the suspicions it awakened, except convinced beyond a doubt they were well founded.

The messenger dispatched the next morning by Mrs. Munro to the village where Mr. Eaton lodged, returned with information of his having set out for London the preceding evening, in consequence of an express acquainting him of the death of a near relation, to whose property he was heir, and to take possession of which his presence there was immediately requisite.

This story, though plausible, gained no credit with Munro; he was convinced it was a fabrication, and, consequently, that an atrocious scheme had been carrying on against his daughter. Yes, he had no  
longer

longer the smallest doubt upon his mind that a villain, availing himself of his absence, had laid a regular plan to betray her: this idea made him almost bless the hand that had reduced him to the necessity of returning home at this crisis, since instrumental, in all probability, to saving him from a wound nothing could have healed. For though of the purity of the "angels that circle the throne of God rejoicing," he had not a more exalted opinion than he had of that of his wife and daughter, he well knew they were too ignorant of the arts of the flagitious, to be any match for those of a hardened libertine. He could no longer think of concealing from his wife the opinion he had formed of Mr. Eaton; she heard it with astonishment, and, notwithstanding the deference she paid to his judgment, with something like incredulity: had Eaton been a young man, she might, nay probably would, have subscribed without hesitation to the justness of it; but his age

was

was such an assurance to her of his feelings being divested of that impetuosity, which, in the early season of life, but too frequently occasions a lapse from virtue, that she could not immediately bring herself to believe him guilty.

“Trust me, my love,” said Munro, in reply to her observations on the subject, “unbridled passions are not confined entirely to the bosom of youth—if in the morning of life we allow them to triumph, in the evening they will domineer—Ætna is not the only object in the creation that has snow upon its head, and a devastating fire within its veins: but, even though I should be convinced my conjectures respecting Mr. Eaton were erroneous, still, I confess, I should give our Elizabeth with reluctance to him, persuaded as I am, that without parity of age there cannot be that unity of sentiment so essential to the happiness of the married state, at least the happiness of a heart of sensibility like her’s; besides, I am certain she already repents  
her

her engagement, and equally so, that she would never have thought of forming such a one but on our account."

This assertion occasioned reflections in the mind of Mrs. Munro which gradually revived a train of circumstances in her recollection, that tended to convince her it was a just one, and consequently made her rejoice at the marriage of her daughter with Mr. Eaton being prevented.

From the wretchedness which the fond parents were now equally certain the idea of this marriage caused her, they delayed not relieving their Elizabeth. To paint her transports at the moment, her joy, her gratitude, at being released from her promise to Mr. Eaton, at finding that the sacrifice of her happiness to theirs was what they neither expected, nor would consciously permit, would be impossible. An insupportable weight was immediately removed from her heart, by the removal of the chains which she had imposed upon herself; the melancholy  
which

which had began to pervade her mind, and make her view every object through a gloomy medium, instantly vanished; again all around wore a smiling aspect, for again

“ Hope, with eyes so fair,  
Whisper’d promised pleasure,  
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail.”

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## CHAP. V.

“What then remains, but, after past annoy,  
To take the good vicissitude of joy,  
To thank the gracious gods for what they give,  
Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live?”

DRYDEN.

THE whispers of Hope were, however, sometimes interrupted by the suggestions of fear: when Elizabeth reflected on the apparently abrupt manner in which Captain Delacour had quitted Heathwood, she was not without apprehensions of its being owing to pique, and, consequently, that he would make no effort for the renewal of their acquaintance.

Among those who came to enquire into the particulars of the affair which occa-

sioned Munro's unexpected return home, was Jenkins, the steward at Firgrove, and to him was entrusted the letter which Munro wrote to Lord O'Sinister relative to it. To this, in due time, an answer was received, expressive of the greatest horror and indignation at what had happened, and a determination to take immediate steps for the investigation of it—"And as I have no doubt," his Lordship continued, "of these steps proving successful, I shall hope, and expect to hear, that, as soon as able to travel, you are again on your way to Temora, where, with real gratitude, I have learned your unceasing exertions to forward my wishes." He then, after dwelling on the uneasiness he felt at the thoughts of what the family of Munro must have suffered from the attempt upon his life, mentioned his having entered into a correspondence with Osmond, and being greatly pleased with his style and turn of thinking; and concluded, by saying he should feel himself highly obliged,  
by

by the ladies paying some little attention to a particular friend of his, a widow lady of the name of Elford, who, in her way to the Highlands, for which she was on the point of quitting London, purposed resting a day or two at Firgrove.

From such a friend as Lord O'Sinister, it must have been a very disagreeable request indeed, which Munro or his family would have had any hesitation in complying with: accordingly, as soon as apprized of the arrival of Mrs. Elford, they hastened to pay their respects to her, and devoted the two days she passed in the neighbourhood almost entirely to her. They found her a pleasing, sensible woman, somewhat advanced in life, but still so lively and insinuating in her manners, that to converse with her without feeling prepossessed in her favour, was scarcely possible: in a word, she so ingratiated herself into their good graces, that, on her expressing a wish for the company of Elizabeth during her stay in the Highlands, no objection was

made to the proposal, but by Elizabeth herself, and that only on account of the unwillingness she felt to leave her father at this juncture, who still continued lame: both he and her mother, however, were too anxious to promote her amusement to permit her to decline the invitation, especially when assured her absence at the farthest would not exceed a fortnight.

At an early hour in the morning she quitted Heathwood with her new friend, and, towards the decline of day, reached the end of their journey, not a little gratified by the romantic scenery it gave her an opportunity of viewing.

In a narrow glen, open at one end to the sea, and winding away at the other like a meandering river, amidst rocks, woods, mountains, and falling streams, the picturesque interspersions of which brought to mind the rude but richly luxuriant wildness of Claude Lorrain's landscapes, stood the habitation of Mrs. Elford, for the purpose of disposing of which she averred  
this

this journey had been undertaken, a long, low, spacious, but somewhat ancient and dilapidated building, on such a spot as Ossian desired to repose in. "O lay me, ye that see the light," he said, "near some rock of my hills: let the thick hazels be around, let the rustling oak be near, green be the place of my rest, and let the sound of the distant torrent be heard." Every thing within proclaimed long desertion and decay; a few old servants composed the household, and melancholy itself could not have desired any thing more solitary or still.

In another frame of mind, and Elizabeth perhaps might not have liked an abode of this description; but now, owing to the impression which recent occurrences had made upon her, it suited her better than a livelier one would have done.

The domestics being apprized of the coming of their lady, dinner was provided against her arrival: scarcely was it over when she was summoned to a person on

business in another room; she accordingly repaired thither, leaving Elizabeth to amuse herself as she pleased during her absence.

The evening was fine, and Elizabeth no sooner found herself alone, than her impatience to take a nearer survey of the romantic scenery which so delighted her eye, induced her to quit the house, and bend her steps towards the sea, from which it was distant but a short way. Here the magnificent spectacle of the setting sun sinking to appearance amidst the glittering waves, and the glowing tints of the beetling cliffs that caught his parting rays, the haunts of innumerable wild-fowl, and richly tufted with marine weeds and plants, and dotted with self-implanted groves of elder, so that not unfrequently, by those who skirted the feet of these stupendous precipices, the sweet notes of the throstle and the rock lark were heard mingling with, and at times predominating over, the harsh and discordant cries of the grey gulls  
and

and kittiwaks, alternately fixed her attention, and excited the most rapturous enthusiasm in her breast, such as the sublime of nature never fails of awaking in minds of sensibility: but, by degrees, this gave place to the feelings inspired by the reflection of being now in the immediate vicinity of her father's ancient neighbourhood—that residence which he had been so unjustly, and, she feared, for ever banished from; wondering, if by any chance she came in her grandfather's way, whether he would notice her, and recalling to recollection the manner in which, should such a circumstance occur, her father had desired her to act—namely, in such a way as should prove her having been brought up to respect the ties which connected them. She wandered on, almost unconsciously, till her progress was impeded by a projecting rock, against which the waves broke in white foam, as if enraged at the barrier it opposed to their innovations.

“And thus,” said Elizabeth, as, pausing

and leaning against a jutting point of it, she saw wave succeeding wave and idly dispersing on the shore, "does hope succeed hope in the human mind! scarce has one faded and become extinct, ere another rises, calming the perturbations of disappointment, and keeping aloof despair—friend of the unhappy, soother of the afflicted, but for thee, how dark and dreary were often the path of life! supported by thee what difficulties cannot man endure, what sorrows not sustain! Oh, never may my bosom cease to lodge thee! for, as the poet elegantly says,

"Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,  
Adorns and cheers the way,  
And still, as darker grows the night,  
Emits a brighter ray."

From her meditative attitude she was roused by a strain of wild, but exquisite melody; she started, and looked toward the summit of the cliff, whence it seemed to proceed, but without perceiving any one—

one—"Was it then an ideal sound I heard," cried she to herself, after pausing some minutes in expectation of its being repeated, "or one peculiar to these solitary regions, such as incline the unenlightened mind to superstition, and led our rude forefathers to believe, that spirits rode on the clouds, and sung on the winds of the rock?"

She ceased, for again soft music floated on the air, and again, like the strain that had preceded it, gradually died away amidst the cavities of the cliff, like the last faint sighs of expiring nature.

Elizabeth, now looking about her more narrowly than she had before done, discovered one of these cavities, and immediately opposite to it a corresponding one; divided from it by a narrow path; prompted by curiosity, she ventured within in, and, passing the intervening space, advanced through the other; but scarcely had she issued from the farther outlet, when she started back, in confusion and dismay; at beholding a large party of gentlemen at

dinner beneath the shelter of a cliff, a vessel at anchor near them, and, on a crag above them, the musicians whose wild melody had drawn her to the spot. Her confusion, at starting thus abruptly upon them, was not a little encreased by their exclamations at seeing her, and still further augmented, by hearing herself pursued through the cavern—her being alone and unknown to any of the party, making her dread meeting with some impertinence. But, notwithstanding her speed, she was overtaken, and her flying steps arrested by the seizure of her gown; panting and trembling, she turned to resent this insolence, but lost the power of utterance on beholding, instead of a presumptuous stranger, Captain Delacour. Her emotions at this unexpected meeting were such, as nearly to overpower her, and render his support necessary. For a minute she unconsciously rested against his shoulder, then, recovering to a sense of her situation, broke with blushes from him, and  
moved

moved forward. Delacour did not attempt to oppose her progress, on the contrary, he took her hand, and eagerly hurried her from the beach, up a winding path amidst the rocks, in consequence of knowing he was not the only person of the party who had followed her; but on reaching a retired spot, at some distance from the place where his companions had lost sight of him, he gently resisted her efforts to proceed—"For a minute let me detain you," cried he, "to express the happiness this unexpected meeting has given me, and enquire to what fortunate circumstance is owing the pleasure of finding you in this neighbourhood?"

Elizabeth, in a voice trembling through agitation, a cheek flushed by emotion, informed him.

"How delightful!" said he, in reply; "how amply does this moment compensate for the pain I endured at being compelled to leave Heathwood in the abrupt manner I did!"

“Compelled!” Elizabeth repeated the expression to herself; it was not then from pique or choice, but owing to necessity he had quitted it without seeking another interview with her—delightful idea! her bosom swelled with rapture at it.

“The relation to whom I am on a visit here,” continued Delacour, “apprized of my being on my way, and impatient and uneasy at my stopping at Heathwood, sent me a summons which I could not avoid obeying; my ill humour at the circumstance, however, was in some degree subdued, by the attention and pleasure with which she listened to my conversation about you and your mother, owing to her having formerly been intimately acquainted with your father. She is prepared to admire, to esteem, to love you,” he added, with encreasing animation, “and will, I am convinced, eagerly embrace the opportunity now afforded of soliciting your acquaintance—to-morrow, with your permission,

mission, I will have the honour of introducing her to you."

Elizabeth bowed—she should consider herself highly flattered by a visit from her, she said.

"Then, this matter being arranged, I will no longer delay your return home," cried Delacour, passionately kissing her hand.

"Nay," said Elizabeth, half pausing, and perhaps a little coquettishly, on finding he still continued by her side, "I shall think you sacrifice quite too much to complaisance, if you let me be the means of taking you from your party."

"And do you really," cried Delacour, a little reproachfully, and pursuing her half-averted eyes with his, "attribute to complaisance alone my wish to attend you home? No, no," smiling, and in an altered, an exulting tone, he added, rightly interpreting the soft confusion of her looks, "I perceive you do not do me such injustice."

"Well,

“Well, well,” said Elizabeth, endeavouring, under an air of unconcern, to hide the pleasure with which her bosom throbbed at the delightful idea of being regarded with more than indifference by him for whom the secret sigh of her soul was breathed, “let us speak no more on the subject—do you find this neighbourhood pleasant?”

“Lately but tolerable, but now (bowing with a gallant air), I shall find it delightful.”

“Fewer compliments,” said Elizabeth gaily, “or I shall be tempted to suspect your sincerity.”

“Then, rather than excite a doubt of it in your mind, be my tongue mute, and my eyes the only herald of my heart.”

On reaching Mrs. Elford’s habitation—“Must I then,” said Delacour as he knocked at the door, “bid you farewell so soon?”

Elizabeth hesitated for a minute, then replied, she made no doubt Mrs. Elford would be happy to see him.

“I have

"I have your permission then," returned he eagerly, "to attend you in?"

Elizabeth bowed, the door opened, and Delacour followed her into a parlour, where they found the tea-equipage prepared, but no Mrs. Elford—a circumstance, perhaps, neither much regretted.

"Oh, how often," said Delacour, in accents of mingled tenderness and animation, as he seated himself beside her, "have I wished me thus—wished to be thus situated—wished for such an opportunity of unclasping my heart to you—of giving utterance to its wishes, its hopes, its fears; for where there is love, I now find, from experience, there will be apprehension."

"Especially," returned Elizabeth, a little archly, "where there is diffidence."

"True," cried Delacour laughing; "and as I have, notwithstanding what you may think to the contrary, more than a moderate share of that, except I receive some hope, some flattering assurance that I may——"

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The door opened and prevented his finishing the sentence; both he and Elizabeth looked anxiously towards it, but, instead of seeing Mrs. Elford, as they expected, a servant entered, to say she found herself so indisposed after her journey, that she was unable to come down, and therefore requested Elizabeth's company to tea in her dressing-room.

"Ah, I now find," said Delacour in a low voice, and with an air of chagrin, as he arose to depart, in consequence of this message, "'tis a true observation, happiness is of a fugitive nature; but for present disappointment I shall endeavour to console myself by anticipation of to-morrow." Then raising her hand to his lips for a moment, he made his parting bow and withdrew.

Elizabeth lingered at a window, whence she could trace his steps, till he had entirely receded from her view; she then, with a heart throbbing with the most delightful sensations, hastened to the chamber of Mrs. Elford,

Elford, but paused, through surprise, at the entrance, occasioned by finding her without the smallest appearance of indisposition.

“Why, what’s the matter, my dear?” asked Mrs. Elford laughing; “you look astonished.”

“A little so, I confess, Madam,” replied Elizabeth, as she advanced into the room, “but, at the same time, agreeably so, I assure you, since, contrary to what I was led to expect, I perceive no symptoms of illness about you.”

“Oh, it’s not my way, my dear, to yield to complaints: but come, take a seat, and let me know where you met with that handsome young fellow that attended you home.”

The terms in which this enquiry was made excited a degree of surprise, it might be said of disgust, in the mind of Elizabeth, that took from her the power of immediately answering it.

Mrs. Elford again laughed, and enquired  
whether

whether the surprise she manifested was owing to her having had the candour to confess she thought the gentleman handsome, or the bad taste to reckon him so?—"If to the former," added she, "when you know me better, you'll cease to wonder at hearing me say what I think, as it has always been my way to do so." She then repeated her question, and received a reply to it. This, however, did not satisfy her; Elizabeth having accidentally mentioned her meeting with Delacour before, she rested not till she had learned when, where, and how, in short, every particular relative to their acquaintance.

"And so," cried she, on obtaining the full gratification of her curiosity, "you have given him permission to wait on you to-morrow?"

"Yes, Madam," answered Elizabeth, but in rather a hesitating manner, owing to the air of dissatisfaction, at least so she fancied, with which these words were uttered; "but if you have the least objection

tion to his being introduced to you, or to my seeing him——”

“Me!—Lord, child, not the least,” interrupted Mrs. Elford; “or, if I had, it would only be in consequence of the dubious light in which I think he appears: but a short time will, I hope, put it beyond a doubt, whether or not the anonymous letter alluded to him.”

“That has already been done, Madam,” said Elizabeth with involuntary warmth.

“Indeed! well, my dear, I trust he will prove deserving of your good opinion—if, indeed, he has a relation in the neighbourhood, and introduces her to you, then, indeed, I shall think him entitled to your notice; but——”

“Till you are convinced he is,” interrupted Elizabeth, with a quickness which proved, beyond a doubt, her being piqued by the suggestion of any thing to the prejudice of Delacour, “we will, Madam, if you please, cease to converse about him.”

Mrs. Elford nodded—“As you please,  
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my dear," said she, and immediately changed the conversation.

Ill humour was a guest that could not long retain a place in such a bosom as Elizabeth's; she quickly, therefore, ceased to feel angry with Mrs. Elford, by reflecting, that what she had said concerning Delacour could alone be owing to anxiety for her welfare; but, notwithstanding this, could not help wishing to be alone, that she might have an uninterrupted opportunity of revolving all that had passed in her recent interview with him.

His looks, his words, his manner, all tended to confirm her in the delightful idea of being beloved by him, and his immediately meaning to make an overture for her hand. That her parents would have any hesitation in permitting her union with him, she could not imagine, and, of course, saw nothing at this moment but happiness before her.

At breakfast Mrs. Elford gave orders for the admission of Captain Delacour; and,

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on quitting the parlour to receive a person in treaty for her house, desired when he came she might be informed.

Elizabeth, on being left to herself, took up a book, but her ideas wandered too much to permit her to be amused with reading; and she at length laid it aside, to steal into the hall, for the purpose of looking at the clock. She found it on the stroke of twelve—"Well, Delacour will soon be here now," thought she, as she softly re-entered the parlour.

She was mistaken, however—hour after hour passed away without seeing him; and, at length, the announcement of dinner made her give up all hopes of seeing him that day. With a feeling of mortified pride Elizabeth joined Mrs. Elford, longing, yet almost fearing to hear what she would say relative to his not coming, for that she would comment upon the circumstance she made no doubt.

During dinner, however, not a word was said on the subject, but this Elizabeth imputed

puted to the presence of the servants; Mrs. Elford, however, was equally silent after they withdrew; and Elizabeth, impatient and vexed, was more than once on the point of introducing it herself, but for a fear of incurring the imputation of over-anxiety for his visit. At length, after a silence of a few minutes—"So, after all, no visitors here to-day," said Mrs. Elford, in a laughing manner.

"No," replied Elizabeth, with an eagerness which evinced her anxiety for Mrs. Elford's opinion on the subject; "don't you (hesitating a little) think 'tis rather strange, Madam?"

"We have a long evening before us," returned Mrs. Elford; "Captain Delacour, therefore, may still be here."

"True," cried Elizabeth, joyfully catching at these words; "I wonder it did not occur to me that he might."

Mrs. Elford made no reply, and, a new subject being introduced, they continued to chat till after tea, when again she made  
business

business the pretext for leaving Elizabeth to herself.

Vexed, mortified, disappointed, for that Captain Delacour's expected visit would not be paid this day, she was by this time pretty well convinced, and for the failure of which she knew not how to account in any satisfactory manner, Elizabeth no sooner found herself alone, than she strolled from the parlour into a wild kind of garden into which it opened, in order to be out of the way of observation, till she had in some degree subdued her present feelings: the reflections, however, which occupied her mind were not, by any means, calculated to enable her to conquer them. Lost in thought, she wandered on, till startled by a tap on the shoulder, when, turning, she beheld Mrs. Elford.

"Upon my word," laughing, and passing her arm under her's, "the reverie of a philosopher could not have been more profound—may I enquire the subject of your meditations, or at least guess?"

Elizabeth blushed and drooped her head, but too conscious that Mrs. Elford more than suspected the state of her heart.

“Come, come,” added Mrs. Elford, “he is not worth another thought.”

“He!” repeated Elizabeth with emphasis.

“Why, I hope,” smiling a little archly in her face, “you will not pretend to deny that you were thinking of Captain Delacour?”

“Well, Madam,” scarcely conscious of what she uttered, said Elizabeth.

“Well, Madam,” cried Mrs. Elford, mimicking her agitated tone; “why nothing more, my dear, than that I think it very natural for the thoughts of a young girl, like you, to be occupied by a handsome young man like him, but certainly no longer than while he treats her with proper respect and attention, in both of which he has been totally deficient to you.”

“You think so?” turning pale, and in a hesitating voice.

“I do

“I do indeed, and hope you do the same, or you will be liable to meet again with rudeness from him: as he led you to expect a visit, he certainly, to have acted consistently with politeness, and the respect due to you, should have given you early intimation of his being unable to pay it, that on his account you might not remain at home—but I suppose, from the ease with which he obtained permission to come here, he thinks he can soon make his peace with you.”

“Do you then think, Madam,” said Elizabeth, in the greatest agitation, at once alarmed and shocked by this speech, “that I should have refused him that permission?”

“Why, to be sure, when I consider the obligations you think yourself under to him, I cannot wonder at the readiness with which you granted it—however, since you have asked the question, I candidly confess, I think it would have been better if you had not done so, for men seldom value

what they easily obtain. Ah, they are sad creatures indeed; ardent only when they see difficulties, but careless when they perceive none: but let me not rail against them, for a perverseness which seems inherent in human nature, which, in all and every stage of life, is, in a greater or less degree, perceptible—the child quickly throws aside the toy it has easily obtained—the prize that may readily be won is reckoned scarce worth contending for—and seldom does the bloodless victory gain the wreath of fame for the conqueror—'tis not the glittering of the diamond, nor the delicacy of the pearl, that renders them so valuable, 'tis the difficulty and danger with which they are procured—the female who would be prized must not unsought be won—she who knows not how to make herself scarce, will never be followed with that ardour so pleasing to the vanity, so flattering to the sensibility of her sex. There is an innocent coquetry, in which every woman should be an adept, that of  
knowing

knowing how to recede, so as to create anxiety, and appear so as to rouse attention; in short, the woman who is politic will often disappoint her own wishes, for the purpose of stimulating those of others, since what we continually see we frequently cease to regard—But come (smiling, and tapping the varying cheek of Elizabeth), I see you are vexed, so let us change the subject; should Captain Delacour come, and make a proper apology for his conduct, let him be forgiven; but, except he does——”

“We’ll speak no more of him,” interrupted Elizabeth with warmth; “for to converse about a person merely to censure them, cannot, in my opinion, afford any gratification.”

Mrs. Elford assented to the justness of this remark by a smile, and immediately after proposed their quitting the garden for the sea-side: to this proposal Elizabeth making no objection, they were proceeding thither, when a servant appeared, to

say a person had called, who wanted to see his mistress for a few minutes.

“ Well, this need not, however, prevent your pursuing your walk,” cried she, addressing her companion, as she withdrew her arm from her; “ for I shall hasten after you, and it would be a pity, after confining yourself the whole of the morning, if you did not avail yourself of so fine an evening to take one.”

In a frame of mind that rendered conversation at the moment painful to her, Elizabeth gladly consented to do as Mrs. Elford wished. On being left to herself, she sauntered on, vainly trying to find an excuse in her own mind for the conduct of Captain Delacour; for, though something might have occurred to prevent his paying his expected visit, she could not conceive that any thing could have occurred to prevent his sending to apologize for the failure of it. That his not coming, however, was owing to any slighting opinion he had conceived of her, she could not  
bring

bring herself to imagine, since, solicited as she had been to receive his visit, she saw not how she could have refused him: but the pleasure of self-acquittal could not immediately overcome the pangs of offended pride and wounded sensibility—the feelings excited by his behaviour were aggravated by the mortifying conjectures to which she saw it had given rise in the mind of Mrs. Elford.

Absorbed in thought, she heeded not the length of time which had elapsed since her quitting home, nor the gloom that was beginning to involve surrounding objects, till startled by approaching steps, when, raising her head, she beheld two men of mean appearance following her steps beneath the shadow of the cliffs; concluding, however, that they were natives of the place, proceeding homeward after the labours of the day, the circumstance excited no alarm, till, on her turning to retrace her way to Mrs. Elford's, she saw them also turn; fear instantly lent her

wings, but, notwithstanding her speed, she was quickly overtaken by them, and, spite of her shrieks and struggles, borne with rapidity from the beach. Her senses forsook her at the moment, and, on regaining them, she found herself seated on horseback before one of the ruffians; for a few minutes she felt wild and confused, as if awaking from a frightful dream; then, coming entirely to herself, she looked around to see where she was, and found herself in a narrow dingle, hemmed in by rocks of immense height, and, as well as the ghastly light diffused around by the "wan pale moon already risen in the east" would permit her to discern, savage aspect.

"Whither are you taking me?" at length burst from her. "O tell me what is the meaning of this outrage?"

"All in good time you'll know," was the reply.

"Now, now, I implore you," cried Elizabeth—"but perhaps," with a sudden change

change of voice, "you've mistaken me for some other person. Yes, yes, it must be so," she added, with a kind of joyful quickness.

"Are you sure it is?" said the ruffian.

"Tell me my name then," returned Elizabeth, "and that will put the matter out of doubt."

"I fancy I shan't be far from the mark, if I say 'tis Munro."

The shock Elizabeth felt at finding she was wrong in her conjecture, for a few minutes deprived her of the power of utterance; on regaining it, she exerted all her eloquence, to try and prevail on the ruffian to release her.

Her supplications, however, might as well have been addressed to an ear of marble, brutal laughter being all they excited.

Still, however, Elizabeth continued to weep, and to implore, at all events, if he would not release her, to let her know by whom he had been employed to carry her off?

“Did you ever hear of a person of the name of Delacour?” at last asked he.

“Delacour!” faintly repeated Elizabeth. “Captain Delacour, do you mean? Gracious Heaven, is it possible!—can he be concerned in such a business as this?”

“Both true and possible,” replied the ruffian; “so, now that I have satisfied your curiosity, I hope you’ll be quiet.”

The anguish of Elizabeth, at finding Delacour a villain, was unspeakable; all the bright, the flattering hopes which she had for some time been indulging in, instantly vanished, leaving her mind a prey to the pangs of disappointment and regret. As soon as she had a little recovered the shock occasioned by the discovery of his baseness, she again assailed the ruffian with tears and entreaties, but to as little purpose as she had before done; and, at last, in absolute despair of succeeding with him, ceased her importunities.

After proceeding some way in silence, she fancied she heard horses advancing up  
the

the dingle; she listened attentively, and soon found her ear had not deceived her; but the shriek which hovered on her lips she suppressed, lest, after all, the persons approaching might not be inclined to afford her the assistance she required: when, however, a few minutes after, she beheld a gentleman and his servant within a few yards of her, she could no longer command herself; a scuffle immediately ensued, which ended in the complete discomfiture and flight of the villain. In a few minutes the faculties which hope, as well as apprehension, had contributed to suspend, being restored, Elizabeth was about thanking her deliverer, when his voice struck her as one she was well acquainted with. Instantly starting from the jutting point of rock on which she had been seated, she caught his arm, and, scarcely conscious of what she was about, dragged him from beneath the shadow of the impending cliff, to an open spot, sufficiently light to allow her to dis-

tinguish his features, and beheld, as she expected, Mr. Eaton.

“Oh, now, now,” she exclaimed, almost with a shriek of transport, and joyfully clasping her hands together, “now, now, I am sure I am safe!”

“Safe!” he repeated in the most exulting accents, and eagerly seizing her hand; “yes, my life, my soul, my Elizabeth! I saw,” added he, “that you did not immediately recollect me, and I feared discovering myself abruptly, lest joy at finding a friend at such a crisis should overcome you; but you still tremble and appear terrified.”

“Terrified!” repeated Elizabeth—then, suddenly checking herself, unwilling on many accounts to betray her knowledge of the person who had carried her off, and anxious, besides, not to encrease the distress which, by this time, she was convinced Mrs. Elford must be in on her account, by delaying her return home, she entreated Mr. Eaton to add to the obligations he had  
already

already conferred on her, by immediately seeing her there; and was proceeding to point out the way, when he interrupted her, to say he was not only well acquainted with her present abode, but the lady she was with.

Leaning on his arm, and followed by his servant leading the horses, they proceeded, without further delay, to the habitation of Mrs. Elford. At the entrance they were met by Mrs. Elford herself, and her servants, all apparently in a state of the greatest consternation—but a consternation which seemed to give place to joy on beholding Elizabeth. The instant she appeared, they eagerly pressed round her, Mrs. Elford enquiring where she had been so long, and adding, that her terror, at not finding her on the beach, whither she had followed her, surpassed description.

In faltering accents Elizabeth assured her she was not to blame for the alarm she had experienced on her account. And then, in hopes of preventing further enquiries,

quiries, at least for the present, on the subject, directed her attention to Mr. Eaton, who, standing rather in the shade, and at some distance from Elizabeth, appeared not to have been noticed by her—no sooner, however, was he, than he was addressed as an old and favourite friend, and invited in the warmest manner into the house—an invitation he accepted with evident pleasure.

But, on entering the parlour, she again began to question Elizabeth, relative to the cause of her long absence, and the terror she appeared under.

Elizabeth was compelled, by agitation, to refer her to Eaton for the gratification of her curiosity. He told her as much as he seemed to know of the affair, not without expressing a wish to be further enlightened on the subject; and in the course of his relation, mentioning his previous knowledge of Elizabeth and her mother, and hinting his present journey to the Highlands owing to the former.

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On his ceasing to speak—"Can you conjecture, my dear girl," cried Mrs. Elford, addressing Elizabeth, "who the perpetrator of this outrage is?"

Elizabeth, determined, if possible, for reasons she deemed sufficiently cogent, not to reveal the baseness of Delacour, averted her looks from Mrs. Elford at this question; and, on its being repeated—"My dear Madam," she evasively replied, "let us say no more on the subject, I implore you."

Mrs. Elford regarded her for a few minutes in silence, then in a low voice—"I will oblige you, my dear," she said; "further questions, indeed, I deem unnecessary, so thoroughly am I convinced, by your manner, that I am not mistaken in the suspicions I have formed; but much as I think Captain Delacour deserving of punishment, I shall not, in conformity to your wishes, expose him to it."

Elizabeth, by a look, testified her gratitude for this complaisance, not, however,  
without

without a dread of the silence she wished observed on the subject being imputed to sentiments for Delacour, which he had proved himself utterly undeserving of; but, should this be the case, she tried to hope, and thus in some degree lessened the pain the apprehension gave her, that her subsequent conduct would convince Mrs. Elford, that, in still supposing she felt such sentiments for him, she wronged her.

Refreshments were brought in, of which Mr. Eaton partook, but Elizabeth was too agitated to follow his example; and, shortly after, under the plea of indisposition, entreated permission to retire, apprehensive, if she continued much longer in his company, of his introducing a subject she could no longer bear to think of listening to.

“If Mr. Eaton can consent to your leaving us so soon, my dear,” cried Mrs. Elford, with a look which convinced Elizabeth she had surmised the nature of his sentiments for her, and deemed them deserving of encouragement,

encouragement, "I can have no objection."

"I hope 'tis unnecessary to say," rejoined he, "that I cannot think of losing Miss Munro's company without the greatest reluctance, but neither can I think of gratifying myself at her expence; for my ready acquiescence, however, to her wishes, (rising from his chair and gently taking her hand, and pressing it between his), I trust I shall be rewarded, by being allowed to pay my devoirs to her at an early hour to-morrow."

"Assuredly," returned Mrs. Elford, answering for her; "I shall hope to see you at breakfast, by which time I hope Miss Munro will be sufficiently recovered to give you the reception you merit."

"Ah, rather say, Madam, inclined to give me the one I wish for!"

Still more confused and agitated by these words, Elizabeth forced away her hand, and, slightly bowing, retreated to her chamber: its solitude, however, restored her

to nothing like tranquillity; she could not reflect on the conduct of Delacour without agony, nor on the evident determination of Eaton to renew his addresses without dismay, since unable, at present, to ascertain whether or not this determination was sanctioned by her parents—if not, she trusted the reserve she resolved on assuming towards him would presently induce him to relinquish it. Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep, remained a stranger to her eyelids during the night; but, though the perturbation of her mind made her quit her bed at an early hour, she did not leave her chamber till summoned to breakfast, so unwilling was she to hold any further converse with Mr. Eaton.

She found him in the parlour as expected; he met her at the entrance with an air of transport, and, taking her evidently reluctant hand, led her to a seat.

For a few minutes, however, no very particular conversation took place; at length, after a short pause, he suddenly  
turned

turned towards her, and, with a look of tender reproach, said, he could not help acknowledging he was hurt, yes, to the very soul, at the indifference manifested by her, in not having once enquired where or how he had been since his leaving Heathwood.

Elizabeth blushed, and began stirring her tea, in order to have a pretext for avoiding his eyes, since, though she did not by any means chuse him to suppose she ever meant to favour his addresses, neither did she like him to imagine her rude or ungrateful. At last, but hesitatingly—"I don't like to be inquisitive," said she.

"Inquisitive! Ah, Elizabeth," in accents of mingled reproach and tenderness, "in some situations, not to be inquisitive is to wound and offend, from the indifference it betrays. But I will not torture myself by imputing to indifference the carelessness you manifest about me—no, to pique will I ascribe it, a pique which, all things considered,

sidered, I cannot wonder at. I did not, however, leave Heathwood, as you were led to suppose, without assigning a sufficient reason for not calling on you previous to my departure, as I am satisfied you would have allowed, had the explanatory letter I wrote you on the subject reached your hands; but, instead of that being the case, the stupid blockhead to whose care it was committed, mislaid it, and thus caused me to incur what none ever less merited (as I have proved to your parents), resentment and suspicion."

Elizabeth started at these words, and lifted her hitherto downcast eyes to his.

"Yes," pursued he, "I have been to Heathwood again, and have not only seen your father and mother, but so thoroughly justified myself in their opinion, as to obtain their permission to follow you hither. When we met last night (so fortunately I flatter myself for both), I was hastening to throw myself at your feet, but forbore hinting my intentions, in consequence of

the agitation you were then in. See," drawing out a pocket-book, and taking a letter from it, "my authority for coming here—did you ever," holding up the letter to her with a gay or rather playful air, "see any hand this reminds you of?"

Elizabeth, with encreasing agitation, cast her eyes on the superscription—"Yes," she replied, "'tis like my father's."

"You are not mistaken; 'tis written by him and addressed to you," kissing and presenting it to her as he spoke.

Elizabeth, trembling from her anticipation of its contents, broke the seal, and read as follows:

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*To Miss Munro.*

"I DESIRED you, my dearest girl, to consider yourself released from your engagement to Mr. Eaton, but I did so merely because I thought he did not  
merit

merit your keeping it; the circumstances which led me to think so have been explained so entirely to my satisfaction, that my opinion of him is totally changed, and, of course, my wishes for your union with him renewed: in honour you are bound to him, and equally so, I hope, by inclination; for I know no man to whom I more sincerely desire to see you married; not, however, let me assure you, because I know his fortune to be large, and his connexions illustrious, but chiefly because I know his heart to be good and his disposition amiable—of the nobleness of it, his proposing for you gives undeniable proof, this not being the age in which disinterested love holds sway.

“I cannot, my dear child, do justice to your mother’s feelings, and mine, at the contemplation of your smiling prospects; and equally so, I am convinced, should I find myself unable to paint our anguish; were these prospects not realized, persuaded, as we are, that there is but little probability.

probability of so advantageous an opportunity of settling in life again occurring as Mr. Eaton now affords you, and besides, of the derogatory light in which refusing him would make you appear, since, assuredly, either to some unworthy attachment or unjustifiable caprice your doing so would be imputed: my wishes are, and hitherto they have been considered as commands by my dear girl, that you should not only immediately permit the renewal of his addresses, but give him your hand without delay, urgent business, he informs me, requiring his speedy presence in London.

“As I think the knowledge of your being the wife of so respectable a man might occasion a pleasing revolution at Glengary, I could wish your nuptials celebrated where you now are, although their being so would prevent your mother and me from having the pleasure of witnessing them, since we could not think of visiting a house so immediately in the vicinity of one we have, at present, so  
many

many powerful reasons for disliking to be near. Emboldened by the goodness and condescending manners of Mrs. Elford, I have written to her on the subject, and, should she have no objection, to the ceremony taking place at her house, I trust you will make none, especially as, the day after, Mr. Eaton has promised to return with you to Heathwood, when it will be decided whether you shall now accompany him to London, or defer your visit to that region of luxury and pleasure till the winter—I know you'll be happy to hear, that, whenever you go, your mother and I are to bear you company.

“ Mr. Eaton is impatient to be gone—I have therefore only time to add, that your mother unites with me in fervent wishes for your happiness in the new state you are, we trust, about entering into—but that you will fail of experiencing this with such a man as Mr. Eaton, cannot be doubted either by her or your

“ Affectionate father,

“ ROBERT MUNRO.”

*Heathwood.*

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Elizabeth kept her eyes fixed on this letter long after she had perused it, convinced, the moment she raised them, she should be called upon to ratify hopes revolting to her feelings—hopes, however, which, notwithstanding this, a little deliberation made her resolve on not disappointing; for she saw plainly that the heart of her father was set upon her union with Mr. Eaton; and, as he had hitherto guided, so still she resolved he should guide her, since his judgment she believed unerring, and his advice she knew dictated by solicitude for her welfare.

She strove to argue herself into a belief that her complance with his wishes in the present instance would soon cease to occasion her pain, that the unworthiness of the object who had first caused an alteration in her sentiments for Mr. Eaton would soon permit her to think of him again as

she

she had originally done; in a word, that she could not see him studying to contribute to her happiness, and that of her family, without experiencing for him feelings calculated to reconcile her to the destiny that made her his.

Spite of these arguments, however, she felt most reluctant to unite her fate with his, insomuch, that, but for the dread she entertained of her refusing him being imputed to an attachment she now blushed to think of, she would in all probability have done so.

Impatient at her silence, as well as evidently alarmed by it, Eaton, at length, in agitated tones enquired, whether or not her father had proved a successful pleader for him?

Elizabeth, as she folded up the letter, attempted to say yes; but this, her first effort to speak contrary to her feelings, proved abortive—what she tried to say was inarticulate.

“Elizabeth,” exclaimed her impassioned lover,

lover, with a flushing cheek and kindling eye, "you alarm me by your manner! Have I in vain endeavoured to obtain for myself an interest in your heart? does your father advocate my cause in vain?"

"No, no," faintly replied the agitated Elizabeth, half shunning half meeting the glance of his keenly-enquiring eye.

"Then you are mine! you are mine!" in the most exulting accents. "You consent to bless me with this treasure!" snatching her cold trembling hand, and alternately pressing it to his lips and heart.

Elizabeth bowed.

"Oh, transport!" he continued, and, throwing his arms round her, he strained her to his breast, and with his lips would have touched her cheek, but that Elizabeth, trembling and disgusted, shrunk from his grasp.

"Cruel!" cried he, as she disengaged herself from his arms, with a countenance expressive of her feelings at the moment. She was, indeed, highly offended by the violence of his transports; since, in the

first place, she conceived them unbecoming his years, and, in the next, indecorous before a third person. In a few minutes, however, she recollected herself sufficiently to be able to reflect on the necessity there was for wearing a complacent air towards him in future, lest, otherwise, she should lead him to imagine, in consenting to become his, she acted contrary to her inclination, and thus, perhaps, lay the foundation of much future misery to herself and connexions; she tried, therefore, to force a smile, and prevent herself from shrinking at his touch; but painful was the effort it cost her to do this—her whose countenance, till the present moment, had never been illumined by a smile that did not immediately emanate from her heart.

“Well, my sweet girl,” said Mrs. Elford, in the kindest accent imaginable, “permit me now to congratulate you on your happy prospects, and to entreat that you will acquiesce in your father’s wishes, for having your nuptials solemnized here—  
he

he has, I presume, mentioned to you his letter to me on this subject?"

Again Elizabeth bowed—she could not reply in any other way at the moment.

"He has also, I make no doubt," said Eaton, in an impatient tone, "explained the necessity there is for our marriage immediately taking place?"

"Yes," faltered out Elizabeth.

"Then this evening, my love, my angel," looking with mingled earnestness and anxiety at her.

She started.

"Well, well, to-morrow then let it be," he added, in consequence of perceiving the horror the proposition gave her. "You see, my adorable girl," again taking her nearly inanimate hand, and pressing his lips to it, "you have not a very bad chance of happiness with a man who can so readily yield his wishes to yours."

Elizabeth hesitated for a few minutes; she thought of trying to prevail on him to postpone their marriage till his return

from London; but the suspicion of her indifference, which it suddenly occurred to her such a measure might, nay probably would, be the means of exciting in his mind, induced her to relinquish the idea, and, though most reluctantly, consent to be his on the morrow.

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## CHAP. VI.

“Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,  
In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,  
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,  
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,  
No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,  
Hath hurtful power o’er true virginity.  
Do you believe me yet? or shall I call  
Antiquity, from the old schools of Greece,  
To testify the arms of chastity?”

MILTON.

“BUT, but,” added Elizabeth, in the same faltering voice in which she had expressed her acquiescence to his wishes, “I—I should like to have——”

“What, my angel?” finding she paused, eagerly demanded the enamoured Eaton, as he hung over her. “Speak your wishes

freely; for if wealth can enable you to gratify them, they shall be gratified."

"To have an effort made to overrule my father and mother's objections to being present at the ceremony," languidly returned Elizabeth.

"Then I will go myself directly to Heathwood, and see what I can do to prevail on them to come hither."

Elizabeth bowed her thanks; and, passionately kissing her fair hand, Eaton withdrew, to set out, as he said, on his journey to Heathwood.

Disturbed, distressed, dispirited, Elizabeth would have retired to her chamber the moment he was gone, but that she apprehended she should offend Mrs. Elford by doing so. Of the absence of Eaton this lady took advantage, to expatiate on his pleasing manners, the many amiable qualities he appeared possessed of, and the consequent happiness Elizabeth must experience with a man so every way worthy of her, and possessed besides of a fortune adequate

quate to obtaining every enjoyment, every luxury this life could afford; in short, she said every thing likely to dispel the cloud which, it did not require her penetration to perceive, hung upon the beauteous brow of Elizabeth, and plainly evinced her heart taking no pleasure in the prospect before her, all dazzling and glittering as it was.

Never, indeed, had she known what real wretchedness was till the present moment, when she found herself on the point of being united to a man for whom she no longer felt a sentiment of regard. So agonizing was the idea of this union to her, that, more than once, she was tempted to decide on retracting her consent to it, but was still prevented, by the consideration of the disappointment such a measure would be productive of to her father, and the derogatory light in which it must make her character appear: but her thoughts were not entirely occupied by herself—what Delacour felt at the failure of his scheme

relative to her, engrossed them not a little.

About sunset Mr. Eaton returned, but unaccompanied by her parents. They could not bear, he said, to come into the neighbourhood of Glengary—"I trust, however," he said, "you will not suffer yourself to be much vexed by their refusal, particularly when you reflect, that in a day or two you'll join them again at Heathwood."

Elizabeth, however, could not help feeling extremely disappointed at their not coming, as she fancied she should have derived both support and consolation from their presence.

Like the mail, it being our intention to proceed as expeditiously as possible, well knowing that tedious books, like tedious journeys, are fatiguing in the extreme, we shall never follow any of our characters into the closet, for the purpose of detailing their soliloquies, apostrophes, or private cogitations, except when we see an absolute

lute necessity for doing so, in order to elucidate some particular circumstance; we shall now, therefore, in pursuance of the above intention, content ourselves with merely saying, that Elizabeth, on the morning destined to give her to Mr. Eaton, appeared with a countenance melancholy but calm, an eye downcast, but unmoistened by a tear.

Mrs. Elford had made it a point that the ceremony should be performed in a consecrated place; accordingly, an old ruined chapel, a few furlongs from the house, and sunk in a deep hollow, amidst rude rocky mountains, was the one fixed on for the purpose.

The moment breakfast was over, the impatient lover arose, for the purpose of conducting his bride thither. She involuntarily recoiled as he approached to take her hand, but, almost instantly recollecting herself, suffered him to do so, without any further manifestation of reluctance. They were attended by Mrs. Elford, the  
N 5 clergyman,

clergyman, and another gentleman to act the part of nuptial father.

The wild and mournful solitude of the chapel, the desolation every where conspicuous in it, aggravated the feelings, and rendered still more chilling the sensations with which Elizabeth entered it: the roof in many places had fallen in, and the consequent damp had nourished all around that kind of vegetation which announces ruin and desertion—the wild vine gadded over the tombs, grass grew thick in the interstices of the flags, and here and there the ivy, creeping through the broken beams, twined itself about the mouldering pillars; the windows, half demolished, half filled up with stones and rubbish, permitted but a partial light to gain admittance, a sickly gleam of sunshine, which, like the smile of despair, served rather to chill than cheer.

The eyes of Elizabeth involuntarily wandered about, and almost as involuntarily she paused, for the purpose of contemplating more attentively some of the

melancholy objects upon which they fell.

The impatient Eaton did not allow her long to continue thus employed—"My love," cried he, a little impetuously, as well as a little reproachfully, "you seem to have forgotten the purpose for which we come hither," attempting, as he spoke, to draw her on to the altar, or rather place on which the altar had stood, for there was now no remains of one; but where there had been, there was an elevation of a few steps.

The feelings of Elizabeth at this moment became uncontrollable—she felt as if she was about signing a bond which would tear her from all she held dear on earth—in the agony of her soul, she unconsciously wrested her hand from Eaton, and sunk, trembling and aghast, against the shoulder of Mrs. Elford.

"She's fainting!" cried he, in accents of alarm—"have you nothing to give her to smell to?"

Mrs. Elford produced a bottle of *eau-de-luce*. Eaton attempted to apply it himself to Elizabeth, but she took it into her own hand; and, after bending her pale face over it a few minutes—"I am better," said she, but sighing, as if there was an intolerable weight upon her heart.

"Yes, yes, so you are, my angel, and you'll be still better by-and-bye—the damp and desolation of this place has affected your spirits, so we'll get through our business in it as fast as possible, and be off."

Again he took her hand; and motioning to the clergyman, the ceremony was about commencing, when the grating of a small door, leading, by means of a long passage, to the cemetery belonging to the chapel, drew the attention of all towards it; no one, however, appeared; and, concluding it was the wind that had moved it, the clergyman was on the point of proceeding, when again the door grated with more violence than it had before done on its rusty hinges, and the  
next

next instant a man, enveloped in a dark grey coat, with a large hat flapped over his face, so as to prevent any part of it from being seen, made his appearance; and with a slow pace, but an air of firmness, stalked forward till he came exactly opposite Mr. Eaton, when he made a full stop.

“Very strange all this!” cried the latter in visible emotion; and, after regarding the unexpected intruder for a minute in silence, and with deep attention, ‘the natural ruby of his cheek too somewhat faded’—“Say, Sir,” in a tone of fierceness, “what is the meaning of this conduct?—Speak!—Who are you?”

“Behold!” replied the other, in a voice of thunder, and taking off his hat—“Behold!” and, drawing nearer to him, he fastened on him eyes gleaming with scorn, indignation, and fury.

“Ha!—you here!” exclaimed Eaton, recoiling at the same time as if he had seen a serpent—“Perdition! what brought you hither?”

“Away,

“Away, vile wretch!” returned the other, indignantly waving his hand—“Away!—the spear of Ithuriel is advancing against thee—thy native deformity can no longer remain concealed. Away! thy lingering here avails thee not; thy intended victim is completely rescued from thee.”

Eaton, though evidently overwhelmed with confusion, attempted to say something; instead, however, of listening to him, the stranger turned towards the door by which he had himself entered, as if for the purpose of calling for assistance. Upon this, Eaton, with a horrible imprecation, precipitately quitted the chapel, followed by Mrs. Elford and his two other friends.

The astonishment of Elizabeth, during this scene, may easier be conceived than described—it was such as rendered her motionless.

“Sweet girl,” cried the stranger, his angry voice and countenance changing into mildness the moment he found they  
were

were alone; "sweet girl," drawing near her, and, with an air at once tender and respectful, taking her hand, "you look not only surprised, but dismayed—but be not alarmed, you are no longer in danger. Yes," observing the wild look she gave him at these words, "I repeat, in danger; for, but a minute ago, you stood on the very brink of a precipice. But I will not torture your feelings by affecting mystery; to be explicit then, know, that the man, or rather fiend, for that title best becomes him, since there is nothing he has not done to degrade the character and native dignity of man, he, I say, to whom you were on the point of giving your hand, is already the husband of another—of one too of the most amiable as well as injured of women—a father also, and of a daughter as lovely and innocent as yourself."

Elizabeth clasped her hands, and looked up—"Accept, oh gracious Heaven," she exclaimed, "accept my thanks, my adoration, for thy interposition in my favour!"

"Yet

“Yet this monster’s name is coupled with praise,” resumed the stranger, “may, by your parents—they regard him as the best of men—they put their fate into his hands. But you will cease to wonder at this, when I tell you that he is——”

“Who?” demanded Elizabeth, panting, and unconsciously grasping his arm.

“Lord O’Sinister.”

In manifest horror Elizabeth recoiled a few paces from him, faintly repeating the name he had uttered.

Had the earth gaped beneath her feet—had the foundations of the world been shaken—had the clouds darted forth fire—had, in short, all that this great globe contains seemed ready to perish and dissolve at the moment, she could scarcely have appeared more shocked than she did, at hearing that the intended betrayer of her honour was the patron of her family. The tears, which her chilled heart would not before let her shed, now gushed in torrents from her.

“Ah

“ Ah then, they are ruined ! my family are ruined ! ” she exclaimed, wringing her hands, her father’s pecuniary obligations to the wretch recurring to her recollection.

“ No, no,” interrupted the stranger; “ I am perfectly aware of your reason for thinking so, but I not only hope, but am inclined to believe, that Lord O’Sinister will let matters remain as they are.”

“ And by what name,” asked Elizabeth, “ am I to mention you in my orisons—you who certainly have been Heaven’s instrument to save me from destruction ? ”

“ My name is Beerscroft: I am the brother of Lady O’Sinister. Her knowledge of her Lord’s disposition—a knowledge which, long ago, would have occasioned her to separate herself from him, but on account of her daughter, whom she knew she must then give up, induces her to keep a vigilant eye upon him; not, however, out of any mean jealousy, but principally for the purpose of obtaining opportunities of frustrating his villainous schemes.

schemes. By means too tedious to relate now, and besides unnecessary for you to hear, she received intimation of his designs on you. The moment she did, she flew to me, as indeed in every emergency she has been wont to do, to entreat me to lose no time in hastening to interpose between you and destruction: I needed not the repetition of this entreaty to induce my doing so, exclusive of the interest which every man of feeling must take in the fate of youth and innocence. I was rendered anxious about yours, by the estimation in which I hold the character of your father, with the chief events of whose life I am acquainted, and, of consequence, the injustice with which he has been treated. I directly repaired from London to Heathwood, where, closely disguised, I hovered about my unworthy relative, and marked the steps he took respecting you. Instead, however, of openly apprizing you of these, I had recourse to an anonymous letter for the purpose, wishing as much as possible,

on

on account of my sister and niece, to screen him from public disgrace, but, at the same time, determined, if I found this had not the desired effect, to enter into a full explanation respecting him. Ere I had time, however, to ascertain whether it would or not, the unexpected return of your father drove him away; but still, aware of the schemes he was capable of forming, I continued to keep a watchful eye upon him, and, at length, but not till after she had got you into her power, succeeded in discovering that he had employed a woman of the vilest description, to inveigle you from the protection of your parents. I would instantly have wrested you from her, but that I thought his shame and disappointment would be heightened by not doing so till the last moment. After the open exposure of his baseness to you, I cannot think he will have the effrontery to annoy you again in any direct manner; and, as to any secret machinations, you will, doubtless, be upon your guard."

"Words

“Words are inadequate to express the obligations I owe you, for the interest you have taken in my fate,” returned Elizabeth.

“Had I taken a less animated one, I should have had little pretensions either to honour or humanity.”

“What will you say to me,” rejoined Elizabeth, “if I ask you to add to these, by conveying me to my parents?”

“That I should conceive myself complimented by your request, but that, at present, you must not think of returning to them; as you could not do so immediately, and in company with me; without exciting enquiries that could not be evaded, and which would, in all probability, lead to the most unpleasant, it might be fatal, consequences, as your father is not a man to be injured or insulted with impunity.”

“What is to be done then?” demanded Elizabeth, not a little agitated.

“Don’t be uneasy; I have procured you a safe and pleasant asylum with a lady in  
the

the neighbourhood, who was formerly well acquainted with your father, and has never ceased to esteem him; and is besides on the most intimate terms with Lady O'Sinister. I confided to her the whole of Lord O'Sinister's conduct respecting you, and prepared her to receive you. A carriage is now waiting at an inn, a little way off, to conduct you to her; and a servant has been already sent to Mrs. Elford, to demand your things. You must inform your parents that she met you by accident, and, discovering your near relationship to her old friend, your father, rested not until she had prevailed on that lady to let you spend some time with her."

"How kind, how considerate have you been throughout this whole affair," said Elizabeth.

"Thank Heaven it has terminated as it has," he replied.

He now led her from the chapel; a few minutes brought them to a small and solitary

tary

tary inn, at which a chaise and pair, with two servants, stood waiting to receive them. They immediately entered it, and, as it drove on, Mr. Beerscroft informed his fair companion, that Mrs. Dunbar, the lady to whom she was going, was a widow, possessed of a large estate in the neighbourhood of Glengary, without children, but surrounded by connexions; and added, he made no doubt, from her amiable manners, and the hospitable and cheerful style in which she lived, Elizabeth would find herself extremely happy with her.

Elizabeth, somewhat calmed by his assuring her he had no apprehension of Lord O'Sinister's proceeding to any extremity against her father, and her heart lightened of an intolerable load, by the idea she no longer hesitated to yield to, of Delacour's having been falsely accused to her—for that her being carried off was by the contrivance of Lord O'Sinister, in order to furnish him with an opportunity of doing something  
which

which should make her think him deserving of her regard, his subsequent conduct permitted her not to doubt—was able to listen with attention, and something like pleasure, to his conversation.

After a ride of two hours, she found herself farther advanced than she had ever before been amidst the wild scenery of the Highlands—a scenery which gradually gave a turn to her thoughts, and inspired her with the liveliest sensations of awe, pleasure, and astonishment, by more than answering the ideas she had formed of the sublimity of nature. The carriage, after proceeding some way through a rugged road, hollowed between tremendous precipices, and open to the sea, began to ascend one of the highest of these, presenting in many places frightful chasms, and headlong torrents, to the view: at length, after a tedious and, at least so Elizabeth thought, dangerous ascent, it reached in safety the plain on which the habitation of Mrs. Dunbar stood, a vast and once impregnable fortress,

tress, but, at this period, exhibiting the moss of years upon its towers, over which the blast of ocean howled with no idle threat of injury. A lofty rampart, but overrun with weeds, and in many places broken and gapped, still encircled it; and, at its rear, arose a still steeper height than that it crowned, covered with a deep mass of shade, principally consisting of oaks, through the intertwisted branches of which a torrent was seen flashing and foaming with impetuous fury down a naked rock, which reared high its head amongst those gigantic sons of the creation. From the plain the eye sought in vain for

“The shelter'd cot, or cultivated farm;”

long mountainous tracts covered with heath, gloomy forests of pine and fir, and deep sterile vallies, shrouded by gloomy precipices, and watered by green-tinctured streams, alone met the view, forming altogether, however, a grand and varied prospect, such as could not be contemplated by a mind of any taste without emotion.

As

As the carriage drove through a long succession of gloomy gateways to an inner court, Elizabeth was almost tempted to imagine she was about entering one of those buildings she had read of in romances, where several unfortunate ladies and knights are made prisoners irrevocably, till released from captivity by the Knight of the Burning Pestle, or some other of equal hardihood. Nor was she less disposed to do so, when, on alighting, she found herself in a spacious hall, hung with armour, and resting its vaulted and richly fretted roof on arches of stone, through which a double row of narrow painted windows were seen, principally composed of stained glass, and divided by a gallery.

From the hall Elizabeth and her companion were conducted up stairs, and through several galleries hung with tapestry and pictures, to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar, where she awaited their arrival.

Nothing could be more gracious than was her reception of Elizabeth; she wel-

comed her to her mansion, as the daughter of a person for whom she had the sincerest regard, and assured her nothing but her long absence from her native land (Mr. Dunbar, owing to ill health, having passed the principal part of his time abroad), had prevented her making minute enquiries after her father, the acquaintance and friend of her juvenile days.

Although beyond the prime of life, her person was still attractive, and the expression of her countenance, and affability and courteousness of her manners, such as immediately confirmed the prepossession which Elizabeth, from the report of Mr. Beerscroft, had conceived in her favour.

She spoke of Lord O'Sinister's conduct in terms of the highest indignation, and bitterly lamented so amiable a woman as his lady being united to a man capable of such atrocity: notwithstanding the indignation, however, that it inspired her with, she concurred with Mr. Beerscroft in opinion, that it could not be too carefully concealed.

After

After a general conversation of about an hour, Mr. Beerscroft rose to take his leave, having many particular reasons for wishing it not to be publicly known that he was at present in Scotland: after paying his parting compliments to Mrs. Dunbar, he turned to Elizabeth, and, taking her hand—"I shall return," said he, "to London, winged with pleasure at the thoughts of having had the happiness of serving so much innocence and sweetness—above all, the daughter of a worthy man. May the next intelligence I receive of you be, that you are the happy bride of some deserving character, and thus still more securely guarded against the machinations of villainy." Then respectfully kissing her hand, he relinquished it, and departed, followed by her thanks and benedictions.

As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Dunbar enquired minutely into the whole of his unworthy brother-in-law's conduct to Elizabeth and her family. Her astonishment, on hearing it detailed, fully equalled her

indignation—"What a propensity to vice must he have," cried she, "who can involve himself in so much trouble on its account!—did he take half the pains to be virtuous that he does to be the reverse, what a noble character would he be!"

She then, in her turn, gratified the curiosity of Elizabeth with some particulars respecting Lady O'Sinister and her brother. They were the only offspring, she informed her, of a very opulent merchant in the city of London, who, contrary to the usual custom, divided his ample property between them, a circumstance which induced Lord O'Sinister, who had always an eye to his own interest, to pay his addresses to the young lady. Mr. Beerscroft was brought up to his father's business, which he found in too flourishing a state, at the old gentleman's decease, to think of withdrawing from: averse, however, to trouble, and inclined, besides, to pleasure, he soon resolved on relieving himself from all the fatiguing part of it, by taking an active partner.

partner. Naturally of an unsuspicious temper, and of an age, besides, when he formed this resolution, in which the mind is apt to be precipitate in its decisions, he was not long in making choice of one, a man of manners so plausible, that he soon obtained a complete ascendancy over him; and, by degrees, succeeded in leading him into deep and, so at least to a cool and sober judgment they would have appeared, extravagant speculations, for the carrying on of which, he pretended large sums were requisite, a pretence that obtained for him the wealth he coveted, and of which he had no sooner made himself master, than he decamped, leaving the too credulous Beerscroft stripped of fortune, and ruined in credit, in consequence of the incorrect manner the business had been carried on, from the time he ceased to take an active part in it himself. He fled for consolation to his brother-in-law—but consolation was almost the last thing he had a chance of receiving from him—his sister was sent

out of the way, in order to prevent her lending him any assistance; and the noble Peer did nothing but upbraid and execrate the folly, which permitted the embezzlement of a fortune he had secretly hoped some unexpected casualty might yet have put him in possession of.

In the hour of calamity, rebuke, however it may be merited, should be avoided, since 'tis an hour in which the heart cannot endure it with calmness, particularly if it comes from those whom we fondly imagined would have sympathized in our sufferings.

Beerscroft quitted the mansion of his titled relative with greater precipitation than he had hurried to it, despair in his heart, distraction in his eye, when his good genius threw him in the way of an old friend, who, like the good Samaritan, carried him to his home, bound up the wounds of his almost broken heart, nor suffered him to leave his hospitable roof till he had obtained him a lucrative situation under government.

The

The deep impression made on him by Lord O'Sinister's conduct to him in the height of his distress, would have induced him to forego all further communication with his Lordship, but on account of his sister, whom he most tenderly loved, as she did him. His society soon became her chief pleasure, every succeeding day tending still more fully to convince her, that happiness was not to be enjoyed with such a man as

" Fate had made her lord."

His total want of those virtues he had so well assumed the semblance of when paying his addresses to her—the indignity and cruel malevolence with which he was constantly in the habit of treating her—his abominable hypocrisy—his vile licentiousness, of which scarce a day passed in which some new account did not reach her ears to wound her heart—his ignoble conduct to her beloved brother—all, by degrees, so completely alienated her affection for

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him,

him, that, but for her daughter, whom, in the event of a separation between them, she knew she should not be allowed to retain with her, she would have proposed one.

Aware of the atrocities her lord was capable of committing, she thought herself not only justified, but performing an indispensable duty, in keeping a watch upon him, for the purpose of being enabled in some degree to counteract his schemes. In the measures she had recourse to for defeating them, her brother was not only her confident but chief agent; and to their exertions many a father was indebted for not bewailing the hour he had become one, many a lovely innocent for not perishing like a loathsome weed in the streets of the metropolis.

In addition to these particulars, Mrs. Dunbar further informed her attentive auditor, that generosity was known but by name to his Lordship; that he did nothing without a secret view to his own interest

or gratification ; yet that, unacquainted as he was in reality with virtue, none could better assume the appearance of it, whenever he found it requisite to do so for the furtherance of his schemes ; in short, that he was a complete man of the world, as the term is generally understood—a violator of every moral obligation, an insidious friend, an implacable enemy, a hardened libertine, holding in absolute detestation his amiable lady, her patient merit, and undeviating rectitude, notwithstanding her thorough knowledge of his baseness, being a kind of reproach to him he could not bear, nor more regarding his lovely daughter, but on account of the still more illustrious and extensive connexions she might be the means of enabling him to form. But what had brought him to Firgrove, a seat she knew he disliked, from its remoteness from the capital, where he could indulge his vicious propensities without fear of absolute exposure, for, in order to be better enabled to deceive, he wished to conceal

his real character from the world, Mrs. Dunbar could not pretend to say.

We, however, being better informed on the subject, are able to state, that his visit to it was on account of a married lady of distinction in the neighbourhood, with whom he had formed an acquaintance the preceding winter in London, and whose husband, a gallant officer, was then risking his life abroad in the service of his king and country. The place in which their assignations were generally kept, was the ruined Abbey; and, in order to prevent the least danger of intrusion, his Lordship employed Mr. Jenkins, his valet, confidant, and prime agent in every villainy, to make use of some contrivance for keeping the rustics away from it. To the ingenuity, therefore, of this gentleman, was owing the noises and appearances that so alarmed and astonished the simple inhabitants of Heathwood.

An easy conquest was never a valued one by Lord O'Sinister; his passion, therefore,

fore, for this lady quickly subsided, and, about the same period, he accidentally, but without being seen himself, beheld the fair Elizabeth—

“ Her form fresher than the morning rose  
When the dew wets its leaves ; unstain'd and pure  
As is the lily, or the mountain snow.”

That very instant love, but not, like Palemon's, chaste desire, sprung in his heart; and he resolved not to rest, until he had discovered who she was, and made an effort to introduce himself to her. As usual, he had recourse to Jenkins, to obtain him the information he desired; and, by his means, soon learnt her name and situation in life. This, however, did not satisfy him; ere he commenced his plans against her, he conceived it requisite to know the principles of her parents, and how they were circumstanced. Accordingly, a pretext was formed for bringing Stubbs to him, whom the indefatigable Jenkins soon succeeded in learning was able to give

him all the particulars he required. Convinced, from the account the honest rustic gave of Munro, that to hope to overcome his principles, or elude the vigilance with which he watched over his daughter, would be ridiculous, he conceived the project of getting him out of the way, by offering him the adjutancy of his regiment; and also (under the supposition of his resembling his father in point of disposition) of keeping the son from Heathwood, by promising to become his patron in future.

On succeeding in this, he lost no time in introducing himself to the innocent Elizabeth and her mother, under the fictitious name of Eaton—fearing to do so by his own, lest premature suspicion should be excited. Accustomed to deceive and triumph, he flattered himself he should find her an easy victim: to his extreme disappointment and mortification, however, he soon perceived that there was not the smallest chance of succeeding with her by the common arts of seduction—by any  
other,

other, notwithstanding her youth, innocence, inexperience, and consequent unsuspicion of the deceitfulness of mankind, but by apparently honourable means, or actual violence—to which last measure he was unwilling to have recourse, lest it should deprive him of all chance of obtaining her heart, for the possession of which he now began to be almost as anxious as he was for the possession of her person. At length he decided on making her a matrimonial overture, and, if she rejected it, on carrying her off—than which nothing could be easier, as he had several emissaries constantly in pay, capable of executing any villainy he set them on.

The rapture he derived, from Elizabeth's acceptance of his addresses, was not a little damped by her father's positively interdicting their nuptials, till he had received unquestionable proofs of his respectability. The chagrin, however, this interdiction caused him, the scheme he formed for deceiving him on the subject, quickly enabled  
him

him to get over, but for carrying which into effect he was prevented by a hint from Mrs. Munro, that she would on no account consent to the marriage of her daughter, till her father could be present at it; and, in its place, formed the horrible project of incapacitating Munro, by personal injury, from retaining the situation he had given him, (a project which had nearly been attended with fatal consequences, the ruffian whom he employed on this occasion being of a still more atrocious disposition than himself), and reducing him to such a state of poverty, by the destruction of his habitation, as would prevent him, he trusted, from throwing new obstacles in the way of his wishes. The partial failure of it threw him into a rage that exceeded description; in the first paroxysm of which, he again thought of carrying off Elizabeth, but again relinquished the idea, from the dread he entertained, of converting the favourable sentiments he had reason to believe she then entertained

entertained for him into horror and disgust, by such a step: the one he had at length recourse to, for getting her into his power, succeeded according to his wishes. The dread he experienced of his conduct towards her being resented by her father or brother, gave way to the conviction of their being both in his power—the former in consequence of the bond he had given him, and which, by a legerdemain trick of Mr. Jenkins, was made payable on demand, and the other, from knowing he had no chance of preferment but through his means.

Mrs. Elford, his vile confederate, in order to prevent any thing like suspicion entering the mind of Elizabeth, took advantage of what she told her respecting Delacour, to instruct the ruffians, who carried her off, to say that he was the person who employed them.

In short, from the whole of Lord O'Sinister's conduct, it was evident, that, as a much admired writer has observed, "when  
villainy

villainy gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch, till it has thoroughly polluted him."

Elizabeth, having heard all the particulars she desired to know respecting the family of Lord O'Sinister, next enquired after that of Glengary. Mrs. Dunbar, in reply, informed her, she so seldom visited there, she could give her but little information concerning them, but that she would introduce a person to her, the Irish house-keeper belonging to it, who frequently visited her's, for the purpose of having her curiosity fully gratified. After a little further conversation, she conducted her to the chamber prepared for her, a spacious and pleasant apartment, with a dressing-room adjoining, in which Elizabeth found the things she had brought with her from Heathwood already deposited. Mrs. Dunbar soon after left her to prepare for dinner; not, however, without first offering to send her woman to assist her in dressing—an offer which Elizabeth, accustomed

customed on all occasions to be her own handmaid, and wishing, besides, to be left for a little time to herself, in order to collect her scattered thoughts, and endeavour to regain the composure the events of the few last hours had disturbed, declined.

When she reflected on these events, she could scarcely believe herself awake, so strange did they appear; gradually, however, the horror with which they inspired her gave way to the delightful consideration, of being again at liberty to indulge the predominant feelings of her heart: she dwelt, with a degree of pleasure that recalled to her cheek the colour which terror and anxiety had banished from it, on the probability there was of her shortly meeting Delacour again—she no longer, in consequence of his being restored to her good opinion, by her detection of the artifices of Mrs. Elford, thought with resentment of the failure of his promised visit—no longer entertained a doubt of his  
being

being able to account for in a satisfactory manner, whenever she should see him—in a word, she again felt happy—again gave way to hope and expectation: the idea, also, of being at length introduced into the kind of society she had so long wished to mix in, (Mrs. Dunbar having given her to understand that she had now not only a number of friends on a visit to her, but large parties every day to dinner), added not a little to her spirits. As soon as she was dressed, she repaired to her chamber; but, instead of finding her there, learned from her woman that she was already gone to the drawing-room to receive her company.

Elizabeth felt a little panic-struck at the thoughts of entering the room by herself; as she found her doing so, however, was not to be avoided, she endeavoured to calm her perturbation, in order to prevent any thing like embarrassment being seen in her manner.

The moment she made her appearance,

Mrs.

Mrs. Dunbar stepped forward to receive her; and, taking her by the hand, introduced her, in a general way, to the party, which consisted of a Mrs. Ruthven, her niece, a young and lately married lady; her husband, a gay and fashionable young man; Miss Rae, her particular friend; Lady Lochness, a lively woman of the world; Mr. Hume, a pert conceited coxcomb; Mr. Grant, a rather blunt and satirical character, and several other ladies and gentlemen.

The ceremony of introduction over, Elizabeth would quickly have recovered her usual ease, but for the whispering conversation, and rude staring of Mrs. Ruthven and her confident, Miss Rae, by whom Mrs. Dunbar had, from motives of goodnature, placed her. To neither, indeed, was the sight of such loveliness as she possessed by any means agreeable, as both had an insatiable rage for admiration, and certain views besides, at this juncture, which they much feared her superior attractions would be the means of disappointing.

Mrs.

Mrs. Ruthven was by no means handsome, nor even pleasing in her appearance: her satirical, and often peevish countenance, was a true index of her mind. Granddaughter and heiress to a Scotch baronet of large fortune, her temper, never very amiable, was so completely injured by the excessive indulgence she met from him, and the high sense she was early taught to entertain of her own consequence, that, as she grew up, she became proud, impatient of the slightest controul, capricious, and vindictive. Her grandfather, and the father of her husband, a man also of large fortune, were long and intimately acquainted, and, at an early period, a union between her and young Ruthven was proposed by them; to which, the young gentleman being gay, gallant, and handsome, she made no objection. Her grandfather lived but to see this completed; he died under the pleasing idea of her happiness being secured by it. The very reverse, however, of this was the case—Ruthven's sole induce-  
ment

ment for accepting her hand, being to obtain a settlement from his father: nor did he long endeavour to conceal his indifference from her. The discovery of this, by the mortification it inflicted on her vanity, irritated her almost to madness, and, by degrees, so completely alienated her affections from him, as to make her bitterly repent having united herself to him—a repentance which was latterly still further heightened, by a predilection she conceived for another object, with whom, her opinion of her charms being of a very exalted nature, she entertained no doubt she could have readily formed an alliance had she been at liberty.

Miss Rae, her bosom friend, was the daughter of a needy parasite of her grandfather's, who, anxious to get her off his hands, had found means of introducing her into the family, where, by dint of flattery and artifice, she contrived to maintain her ground, and acquire a complete ascendancy over Mrs. Ruthven. Her person was shewy,  
and

and so far attracted Mr. Ruthven, as to induce him to pay her attentions that caused her to believe she had made a conquest of him—an idea by no means disagreeable to her, notwithstanding his being the husband of the woman she professed to regard, and to whose kindness she was indebted for almost every advantage she possessed, and every gratification she enjoyed; in short, Mr. Ruthven would have found no difficulty in succeeding with her in the way he wished, but that, just as she was on the point of entering into a capitulation with him, she discovered the criminal passion of his wife; and, under the hope of its leading her into some step that might yet liberate him, resolved on an immediate change in her conduct—imagining, however, that an alteration in it might occasion an alteration in his intentions relative to her. She was utterly mistaken, no miser being ever more covetous of wealth than he was. Flattering herself, however, that he would lead her to the hymeneal altar, if  
released

released from his present matrimonial fetters, she did every thing in her power to instigate his wife to give him an opportunity of breaking them, by secretly reviling him to her, and magnifying the perfections of the man she loved.

Of either the real principles, or present views of her niece, or her confidant, Mrs. Dunbar was alike ignorant and unsuspecting. It must, indeed, have been some very glaring proof of baseness, which could have made her doubt the virtue of the former, so partial was she to her, from the consideration of her being the child of an only and beloved sister. Mrs. Ruthven was not capable of returning her affection: she affected to do so, however, from selfish motives, the principal part of Mrs. Dunbar's fortune being at her own disposal; but, notwithstanding this, would probably not, to pay her a visit, have quitted London (whither she went immediately after her marriage), but that she knew the being whom, of all others, she wished to see was at this time her guest.

Relative

Relative to Elizabeth, Mrs. Dunbar said nothing more to her visitors than that she was the granddaughter of Mr. Munro of Glengary—that, by chance, she had discovered her being in the neighbourhood—out of regard to her father, had invited her to spend some time with her—and that both her person and manners were attractive. This latter part of her information was by no means agreeable to Mrs. Ruthven or Miss Rae, as both, notwithstanding their vanity, were apprehensive of the effect which a newer face than theirs might have upon the respective objects of their regard. But the uneasiness which they felt beforehand was trifling, compared to what they experienced on seeing Elizabeth, so infinitely did she surpass the expectations which Mrs. Dunbar had raised concerning her. That she did this, however, they would have died almost, ere they would have acknowledged even to one another; on the contrary, their envy and malice prompted them to say every thing that was

depreciating of her, as well as to treat her in a manner calculated to make her think little of herself.

“Pretty!” said Mrs. Ruthven, after rudely staring at her some minutes, in a half whisper to Miss Rae, and with a scornful look; “’tis astonishing to me how my aunt can reckon her so.”

“Oh, she is so goodnatured,” returned Miss Rae, with an insidious smile, and carelessly playing with her fan; “but you know, my dear, women are not allowed to be good judges of the beauty of one another; we should ask the gentlemen their opinion—what say you, Hume?” addressing herself to him, as he stood leaning over the back of the sofa she and her friend occupied.

“Say, why, that when a man’s thoughts are entirely occupied by the charms of one lady, ’tis utterly impossible for him to decide upon those of another,” and, with a half suppressed sigh, he cast a languishing glance at Mrs. Ruthven, whose rage for

admiration he had sufficient penetration to perceive, and to whom, it being a maxim with him to pay court wherever fortune smiled, he paid the most extravagant homage.

“Or by himself, you might have added,” cried Mr. Grant, who, as he was passing near where he stood, overheard him.

“Nay, as to that matter, I flatter myself no one can pretend to say I entertain too exalted an opinion of myself.”

“Yet, if any one else entertained half as good a one of you, I should then allow you really had reason for vanity.”

“And pray,” somewhat nettled, “how do you know that that may not be the case?”

“Oh, perhaps so, for some people have strange tastes, and little judgment.”

“What a savage!” exclaimed the irritated Hume to the two ladies, as Grant walked away. “I wonder Mrs. Dunbar can encourage his visits.”

“Perhaps,” said Miss Rae sneeringly,  
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the slighting manner in which Hume had treated her, in consequence of looking upon her rather in the light of an humble companion to Mrs. Ruthven, having provoked her malice against him, "the truths he tells her are not quite so disagreeable as those he tells you."

END OF VOL. I.



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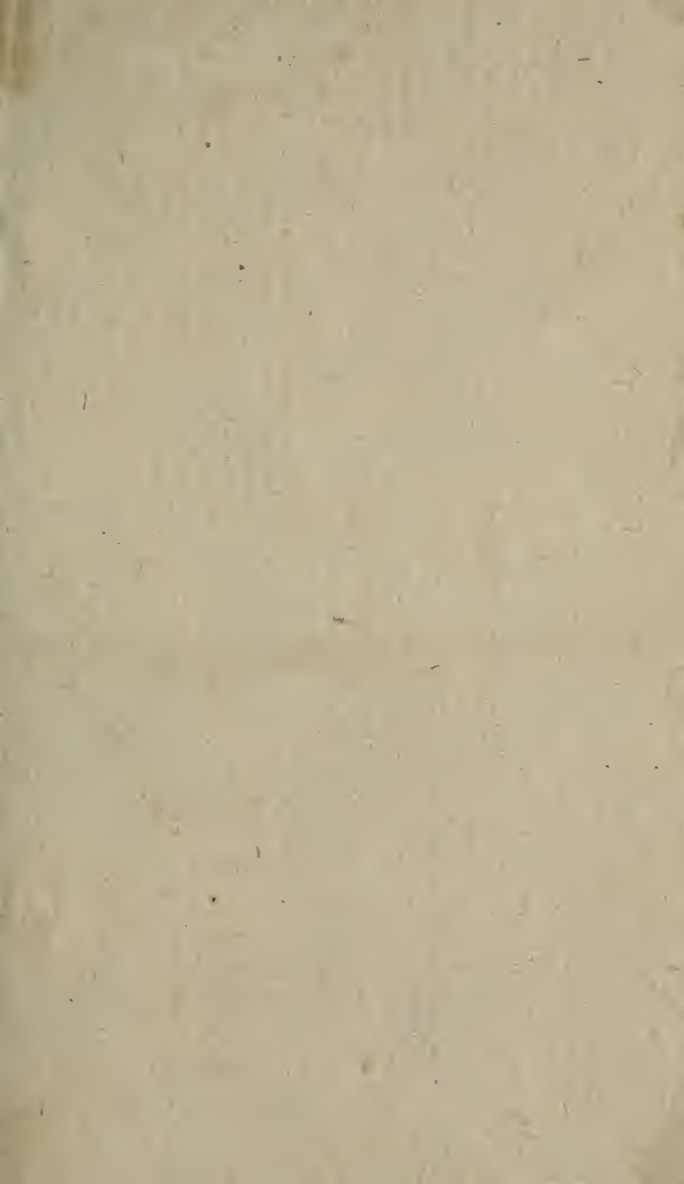
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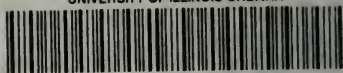
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